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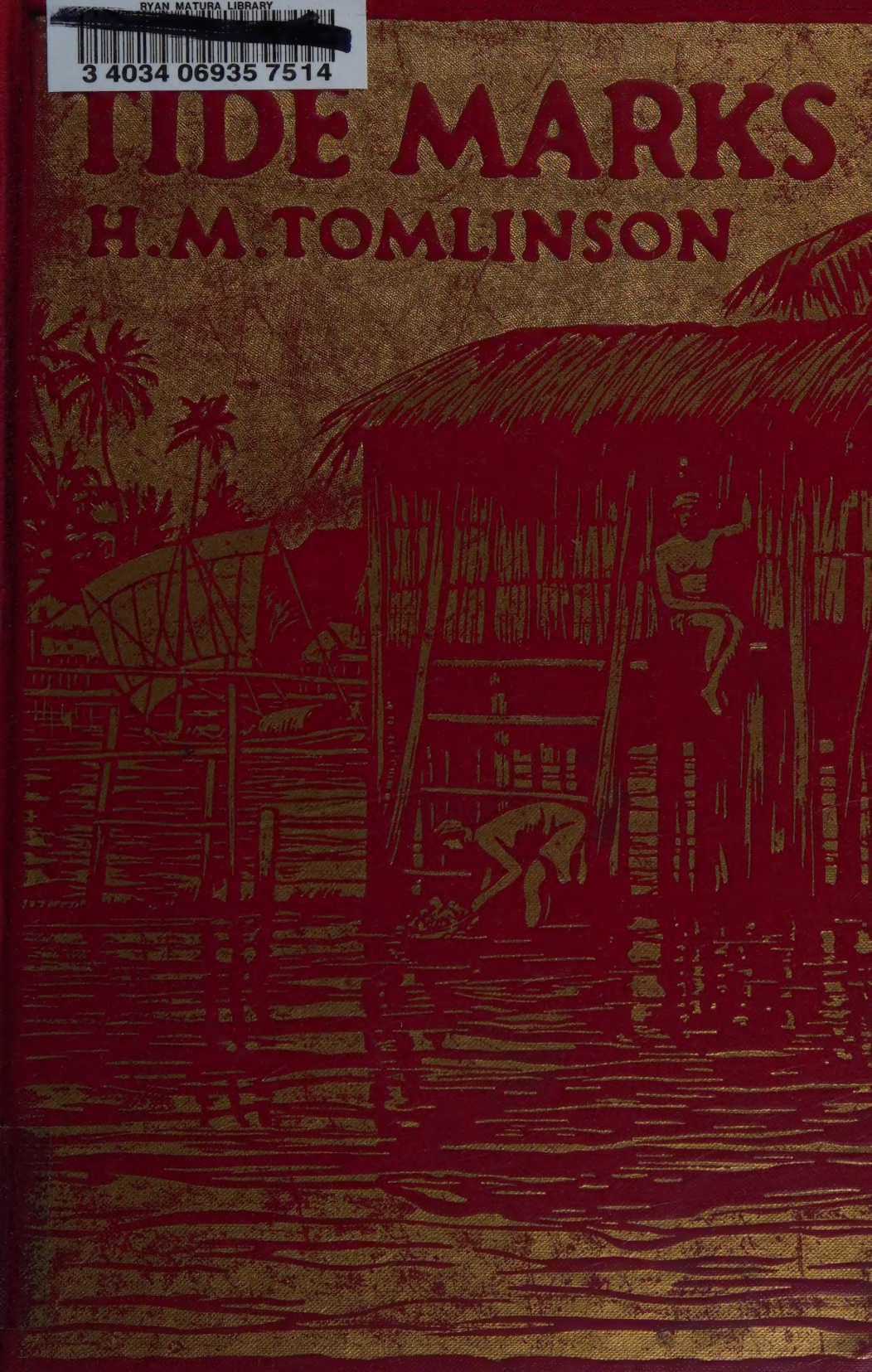
TIDE MARKS

H. M. TOMLINSON



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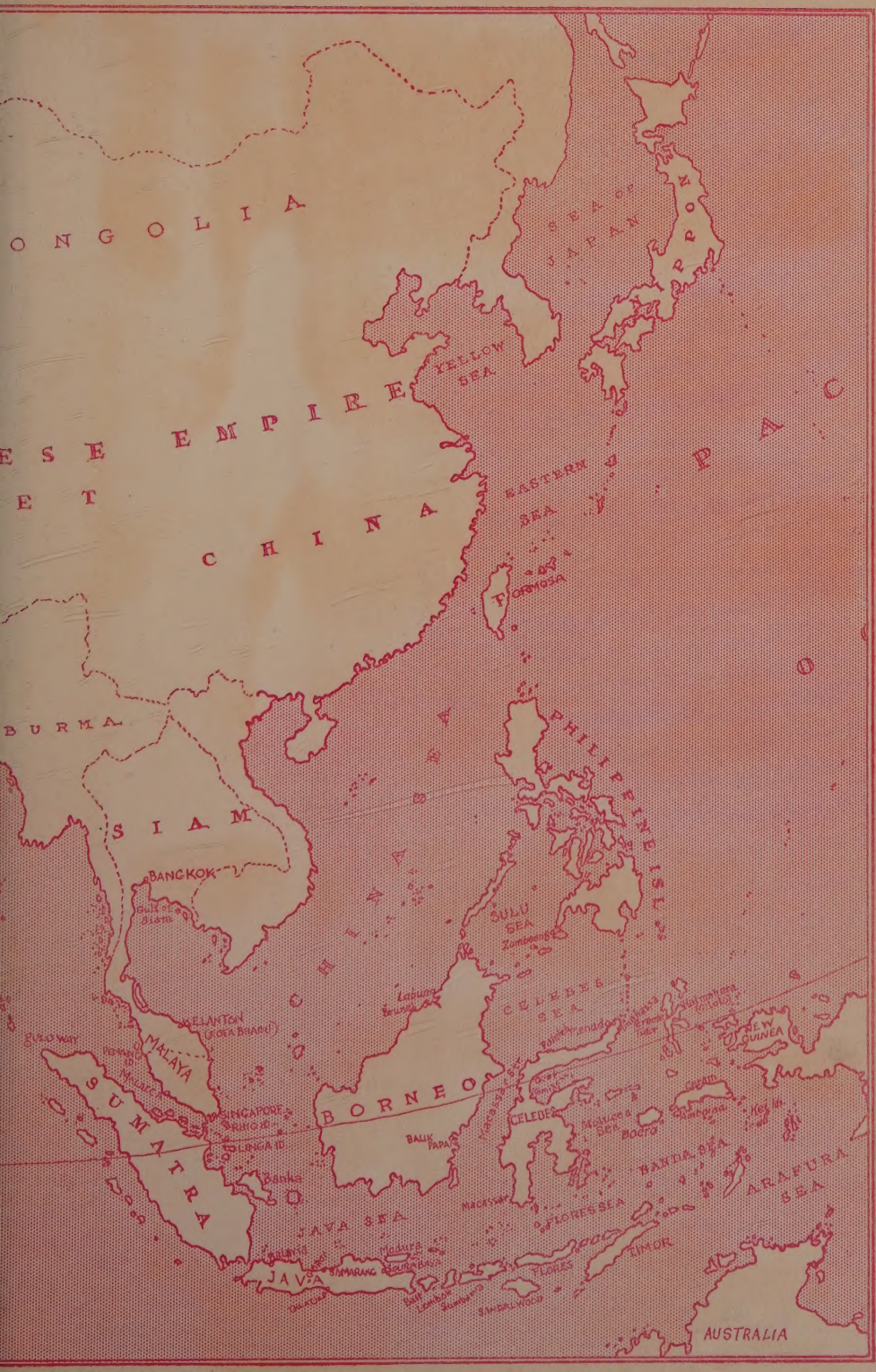
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We can make our minds so like
still water that beings gather
about us that they may see, it may
be, their own images, and so live for
a moment with a clearer, perhaps
even with a fiercer life because of
our quiet.

W. B. Yeats.

This book was donated by the Reverend William J. Fletcher for the use and delight of the faculty, students and friends of Sacred Heart University.

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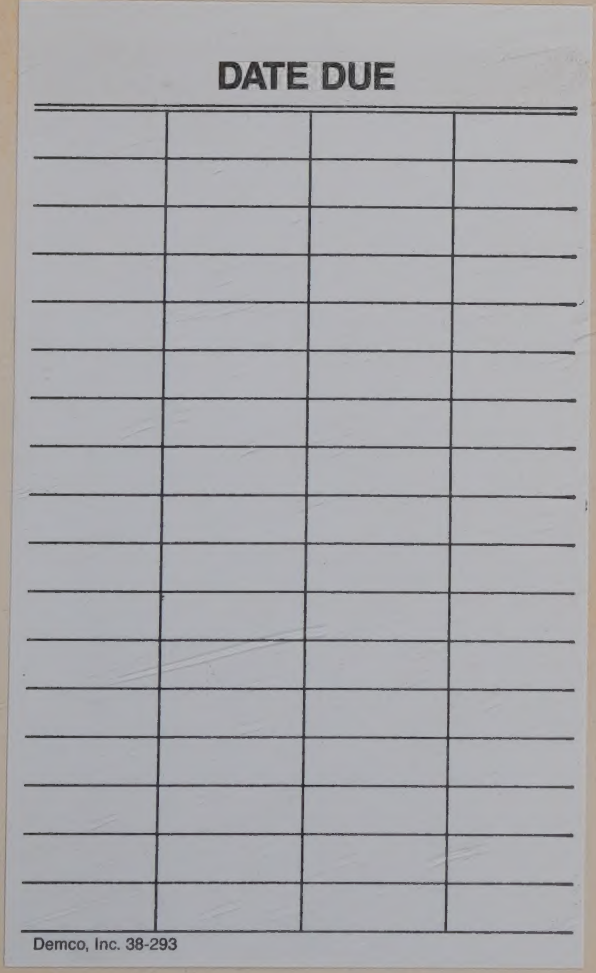

"All Was Quiet Again,
Except for the Flames"

(See p. 80

TIDE MARKS

BEING SOME RECORDS OF A JOURNEY TO THE BEACHES OF THE MOLUCCAS AND THE FOREST OF MALAYA IN 1923

By

H. M. Tomlinson

AUTHOR OF "THE SEA AND THE JUNGLE"

With Illustrations from Drawings by
KERR EBY

Harper & Brothers Publishers
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TIDE MARKS

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M–Y

To

Richard Durning Holt

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TIDE MARKS

Tide Marks

CHAPTER I

From his high window he could see where the Thames, once upon a time, was crossed by Charing Cross Bridge. But not on that winter afternoon. The bridge was a shadow in a murk. It did not cross the Thames. There was no Thames. It was suspended in a void which it did not span; there was no reason to cross, because the other side had gone. The bridge ended midway in space. It was but a spectral relic, the ghost of something already half forgotten above a dim gulf into which London was dissolving in the twilight and silence at the end of an epoch. For the twilight did not seem merely of a day at the end of another year, but the useless residue, in which no more could be accomplished, of a period of human history, long and remarkable, that had all but closed.

He wondered whether he would ever cross that bridge again, outward bound. What, a broken bridge? And is there any escape from your own time, even though its end seems so close that you feel you could take one step and be over in the new era? No. There is nothing to do but to put up with the disappearance of the

everlasting hills and safe landmarks, and grope about in this fog at the latter end of things, like everybody else. The bridge that day went but halfway across. Once it carried men over to France. It was not wanted for that now. The rocket which he heard burst above it to announce the long-desired arrival of a lovely dove was welcomed four years ago; and the dove either did not stay long or else it had turned into a crow.

A postman burst in with a parcel, and went, leaving the door open. Another book! He cut the string, in his right as guardian of literature in that newspaper office. The volume disclosed had a colored wrapper with the seductive picture of a perfect little lady smiling so fatuously that St. Anthony would have laughed miserably at the temptation. Again a novel! He dropped it on the heap behind him—a detritus of beautiful fiction piled in a slope against the wall, a deposit of a variety of glad eyes and simpers. What a market for green gooseberries this world must be! That deposit slithered over a wider area whenever the energetic editor in the next room was trampling to and fro in another attack on the Prime Minister. Then some of it had to be kicked back. But kicking never made that deposit of literature better or different, any more than it did the Premier. Only the cleansing junk-shop man with his periodical cart for the removal of refuse ever did that. And the same trouble sprouted again next day. Trouble generally does. A literary editor, he thought, might be better employed peddling bootlaces, for all the traffic he has with literature; yet it was plain that if he began to edit bootlaces instead, then most likely people would take to wearing buttoned boots, or even jemimas. For,

in spite of the Sermon on the Mount, crystal-gazing, spiritualism, Plato, wireless telegraphy, Buddha, and Old Moore's Almanac, there is no telling what the world will be doing next. The barbarian of ancient Europe who trusted to his reading of the entrails of a fowl when looking for the hidden truth was quite as reasonable as the editor in the next room frowning at the signs of the times through his spectacles. Moreover, at the moment, the editor was not doing even that. He was on a journey to interview the proprietor, to learn whether he should continue to hold up a lamp in a dark and naughty world, or blow it out. Oil costs money.

The open door let in a draught, and with the draught blew in a figure which might have been a poet, but was certainly not an advertising agent. It was a bundle of clothes which looked as though it had been abandoned under the seat of a railway carriage and had crawled out because nobody had troubled to remove it. But its face was still new. It had diffident eyes and a grayish beard. Most likely it was another poet. The lines of that thin face had come of contemplating the glory of the world, and had been deepened by lack of bread. The figure hesitated, knowing that it ought to have remained where it had been thrown. It did not speak. It took off a matured cloth cap and offered for sale some Christmas cards. It had a difficulty in getting them out of its pocket, because one sleeve of its jacket was limp, being empty. But the literary editor was patient; for this visitor had a rare and attractive virtue. He was modest; more modest even than the veiled ladies who brought secret information from Poland, or an

editor with a new idea. He seemed uncertain of his rights, unlike the publisher who had called because his important work had been overlooked, and the politician who was cruelly wronged because the reward he had earned in bolting his principles had gone elsewhere. What had purified this human wreck? He seemed to be unaware of what in justice should be done to him, and was in enjoyable relief from the reviewer who could have handled the job so much better than the fool who did, the inventor of the machine for converting offal into prime cuts, and the superior mystic who knew it long before Einstein. In what school had he learned to be a gentleman?

The man of letters examined the Christmas cards, and read on most of them, "Love One Another." This spiritual injunction was made authoritative with realistic sprays of mistletoe.

"Where," asked the literary editor, rising and pointing to the place where his visitor's right arm used to be—"where did you stop your packet?"

The visitor became very embarrassed. "Well," he said, in doubt—"well, if you were a nice lady, I'd say it was cut off by a German on the Somme, if you understand me. But it was an army mule at Arras. It bit me. And heroes ain't bitten by their own mules. Not in war, sir. Not for home consumption, as you might say."

"But there must be accidents in war."

The visitor rubbed his nose briskly with a dark white handkerchief. "No, sir. Believe me, no. I saw a pal o' mine drowned in a mud hole, but he had to be killed in action, being a gunner, for his friends' sake, like.

In war, heroes are either shot through the heart at the moment of victory or else they gets their arms in slings. Don't you believe nothing else."

"You've come to the wrong office. Everybody here knows that mules are ugly brutes, and never rise to Christian feelings even when war ennobles them."

"Not at all, if I may say so. You don't understand, sir. If I tell people that our mules kicked the enemy, that's all right. But if I tell 'em one of our gun mules bit me, why, I don't know but what they'd think the artful patriotic swine saw through me, if you know what I mean. Got to be careful. Besides, that's nothing now."

"What, nothing to lose your arm?"

The shabby figure stared over the literary table to the shadow of the bridge beyond. He spoke with the quiet confidence of a man whose rich uncle had unexpectedly left a fortune to him. "Nothing at all, sir. I've found God. I've found God." Then he looked at the journalist. "Do you believe in God? You don't begin to live until you do"

The journalist rose in alarm. Not in all his life had another fellow creature asked him whether he believed in God. In that office it was assumed that the name of God should never be used except rhetorically.

"Of all the swindling rogues! You talk to me like that, after telling me you'd have lied, if I'd been an old woman!"

"Sorry, sir, but you were not an old lady, so I give it to you straight. I give people what they can take, just to make the world go around, you understand.

What does it matter? People who can't see the light—well, you can't blame 'em."

"So you think there's a chance I may see it? I wish I knew how to tell whether you are only another hypocrite or not. Here, I'm living in darkness, too, but I'll buy your stock of cards if you'll tell me whether you'd have mentioned God to me if I'd been a nice old lady. What about it?"

"Not a word about God to the old lady, sir. Not a word. On my oath. And for the same reason. She wouldn't have known what I meant. She wouldn't understand that a hero nearly lost his life in a righteous war through the bite of an allied bastard, if you understand me, sir, but if I said I'd found God she'd take it for granted I was all right, like herself. Why get her mixed up, the old dear?"

"So you're all right, are you?" said the envious man of letters, mournfully, who had no God to whom he could give a name. He pointed to the vision of the dissolution of London in the murk. "How do you feel about being at the fag end of everything in that?"

The peddler looked puzzled. "Me? Do you mean the fog? What's that to do with me?" He had accepted a coin, and now he eyed it on his palm and graciously spat upon it before putting it in his pocket. He sidled to the door, and from there he said: "Gov'nor, I'll tell you something. Do you know what we're told? . . ." But the oracle was not revealed, for the fellow turned as though he knew of an interrupter outside, closed the door respectfully, and was gone.

The eye of the bookman wandered to the bridge again. Where did it go to now? That was a rum fellow who

had just gone. Had he really seen a light which could shine clear through the fog and confusion of the earth? But what was the good of trying to see such a light because another man said it was there? Besides, to distinguish between shell shock and God wanted a bit of doing nowadays. Damn that bridge! Why wasn't it blotted out altogether? What was the good of half of it? It used to go to France. Now it projected over a bottomless gulf of time, and was lost midway. It was broken. Where were the fellows who once crossed it? Now they could never get back. It ought not to be looked at. One's thoughts got on to it, fell into the emptiness beyond, and were lost. Yet it was hard to keep the eyes from it. The printer's proofs were the same dust and ashes as ever. No light or humor in them except the places where the compositor had happily blundered. And there the blessed relic still floated in the outer fog, an instant road for vagrant thoughts. And odd visitors, like poets with messages from a world not this or from no world at all, or like the armless man with his seasonable message to love one another, kept blowing in with the cold draught when the careless door was ajar. Perhaps a ghostly traffic moved on that spectral relic. That bridge should be either abolished or adventured upon again. What was the good of sitting and staring at it, while fiction not fit for dogs accumulated against the wall behind? Life was standing still.

At that very instant some of the fiction shot fanwise abruptly over the floor. Was the editor back in the next room? Literary editors might be at the dead end of things, but was life? He went to interview his chief.

But the great man—all editors are that, naturally—was not at his desk. He stood at the window, looking out, though not as if he saw anything there worth having. He turned to his assistant, and began to unwind his muffler.

"Well?"

"Not at all," said the editor, cheerfully, "by no means. We blow out the lamp of our vestal, and the chaste darling is to be sold as a slave."

They stood regarding each other.

"What about us?"

The editor smiled and poked his finger at the bridge in the fog. "We get a move on. Out into the snow, my child, out into the snow."

CHAPTER II

THE letter, there could be no doubt, was addressed to me. This fact, apparently so doubtful, I was careful to verify at once. And so far as English can be plain it told me to go to the Moluccas. Nor was its purpose merely abusive and figurative, as would be the letter of a friend. The letter was typewritten on a commercial form; it was direct and curt; it gave telephone and reference numbers in case I wished to answer back. The letter advised me to pack up, and the place it told me to go to lies—as anyone may see who uses a magnifying glass—between Celebes and New Guinea. But it would take more than a business letter, however formal, to compel us into a belief that we are to travel to a place with a name which can be spelled out only with a strong glass. You experiment with such news on your friends. They will not contradict you; they will be too polite. They will merely stare for an instant, and perhaps nod as though they saw good reason for hoping that you would soon get over this little trouble. Curious things happen to people after war, of course, but time works wonders. That was how they took it from me. It was no good trying to persuade them that this sudden revelation which had come to me by post, this wild dream disguised as a business letter (in exactly the silly way of a dream), suggested anything more than the need of

rest and quiet in a room with primrose walls and windows opening south.

Of course. What else could a man expect of the straightforward, practical minds of his friends? In my best moments I myself laughed at the letter. Though I admit that I played with the pleasing dream the letter had aroused. I used the lens on the chart secretly. I stopped work now and then to think it over. I asked one or two sailors whether they knew the Moluccas; but they appeared to wish to avoid such a subject, as though this sort of talk was childish. Nevertheless, it became plain that so extraordinary a portent as that letter could not be treated lightly. Sometimes, when alone—for it was natural that I did not wish the puerile act to be witnessed in such earnest days of reconstruction as these—I took down the *Malay Archipelago*. Then I found, despite the urgency of our times, it was natural to drop at once on the very place where Wallace becomes, for a man of science, almost lyrical from his boat over the sea meadows of Amboina. And yet that chanting prose passage appeared to settle it. By artificial light in an English winter it was ridiculous. When we know the world to be what it is, who is going to find faith in an open boat afloat in a transparency where sponges and corals are on the floor, and fishes as bright as parrots dart among fronds in the sunlight far below the keel?

It was no good. Ternate and Banda faded away toward the days of Henry the Navigator. The Portuguese, English, Dutch, and Spanish navigators of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries knew how to find them; but not one of my friends who, for whatever privi-

leged reason, might advise me to go to Hades or anywhere, could also readily separate the Moluccas from the Pleiades. The Spice Islands are forgotten. So I was unable to take that business instruction seriously. Wallace, with his outburst over his sea meadows, canceled the letter for me. The mirage dissolved, in the way of dreams that are fair—dissolved reluctantly, like one's faith in a Golden Age—vanished! What to us in Europe are islands poised in a visionary sea, a sea vast and mute, Paradise set in Eternity? Well, we know what they are. Beauty of that kind is merely a stock of sensational stuff, which is safe and easy for the use of hearty novelists and short-story writers who require, to make their books move at all, pirates, trepang, beach-combers, copra, head-hunters, schooners full of rice, and similar matter which easily takes coal-tar dyes in the rapid output of bright and lusty fudge. Otherwise they do not exist. Nor did the conquest of space, as it is called, by flying and wireless telegraphy, give me any heart. Those wonders of human progress brought such islands no nearer to me than they were to Plymouth in Drake's time. Do we imagine we are gods, and may order the world to be re-created superiorly to a geometrical design of petrol tanks and telephone stations? We forget that gods would never do anything of the kind. The gods may be, and perhaps are, anything we choose to make them, but they should be allowed more sense than that. Are we able, with all our aids to progress, to conjure apparitions like those sea meadows any nearer to us? They are where they were, if ever they were anywhere. They are in the same world as the Hesperides. We see them only in idleness, as we see man-

kind at peace, and the star again over Bethlehem. No flying machine will ever reach the Hesperides. You will never, even in the quiet of midnight when hopefully listening in, hear a whisper from that seclusion. How it is some lucky men become assured, and sometimes quite suddenly and without the aid of wireless, the encyclopedias, or any help of ours, of such islands, of such sanctuary from the deadening uproar of error and folly, and so are immune from fogs of every kind, the lessons of the war, the gravest of political disclosures, revolutions, signs of the times, mysticism, and anything the public seems urgently to want, is a wonder to me; but there are such men, and I wish I knew whether they are really mad, or whether their bright serenity is only madness when compared with our practical cynicism and our sane motives of enlightened self-interest.

Yet even we ourselves at times—and there is no serene brightness of madness about us—are startled now and then by a hint of easy escape, as though an unknown door somewhere had opened on light and music which we do not know. Where did that come from? The door closes before we can be sure so curious a light and strange a sound were more than our own hope deceiving itself. And dreary experience has taught us that it is wasting time to look for that door. Either it does not exist or we cannot find it. So that letter was a release, though in a way far inferior to the momentary escape of celestial music. It pretended there was a door. I could fancy a decision had been made in my favor in that invisible sphere where our circumstances are devised, those little incidents which move us this way and that without our ever knowing why. And other

hints continued to drop through my letter box, all at the same angle of incidence. The last one was more than a hint. It named a ship, a place of embarkation, and a day. The day was not far off, either.

This began to make me feel acutely nervous. There could be hardly a doubt that I myself was designated. But could I really accept this mysterious decree? I could not, and I did not. Man never accepts his fate. He has a faith, which nothing ever shakes, that his habits are stronger than destiny. He believes that from the fortress of his daily routine, within which he feels secure, the urgent messengers from the gods will recoil, baffled. Nevertheless, I felt certain by now that one of those dangerous messengers had assaulted my citadel again, so I arranged about me a few mascots, for luck. If that messenger forced his way in, then I was ready for him.

A final imperative knock came at last. No doubt about it. It was on the very day, I noticed, which fate had indicated. Others in that room stood up at the sound, and looked at me. I could see they knew for whom the messenger had come. Apparently the hour had struck. My routine had fallen down. It was a cab-driver who had knocked. And not till I saw some of my mascots, which were traveling bags, already on his chariot, did I look back at my porch and understand that that cab was to take me over the first stage to the Moluccas. Was I exalted at that moment? I shall not say. But what the deuce, I said to myself, as I climbed into the cab, do the blessed sponges of the Pacific matter to me? Have the presiding gods, I silently exclaimed,

ever heard me complain about my pleasing suburb? What have I done? But the cabman had a face like the shutter of an empty house. He was clearly in the conspiracy to get me out of it. He drove on.

CHAPTER III

THE lethargy of soul is proof against all the facts we do not care to look at. No immortal soldier ever accepted the nature of his destiny in France till the moment when he saw his pal drop. And therefore I still thought there was a chance that this cab was a misdirection. I had been mistaken for another man. But promptly to the minute I was left at Euston. Still, Euston was real enough to be not at all ominous. There can be nothing in all this world less fay than the London and North Western Railway and its officials. There is little in them to make anyone suspect the subtle and transforming art of what is faery. So I fell asleep in moderate confidence, and the wheels went around.

I don't know how long they had been revolving, with many a jolt and bump through the night, but I woke with a conviction of the need that day to give attention to those old volumes in the cupboard . . . if the mice were really nesting there, as I was told. . . . Where was I? Odd! I could see through a window the dark waste of a railway siding. By the look of it this was the dead end of all railway tracks. Beyond this no man could go. The dawn had barely glanced at it, because, I suppose, it was not going to spoil good sunshine on such a place as that. It was littered with old newspapers with dates that would be in the week before last. Nothing else could be seen, except a wall the color of soot,

which was high enough to screen us from all that was lovely and of good report. Now, I thought, my misdirection has been discovered. Here I am, shoved into a celestial pigeonhole for lost souls, till there is time to find my right label and post me back to my old volumes. It was then that a familiar appeared, in a gold-braided uniform, and whispered craftily that this was Birkenhead. How I got there I don't know.

Outside it was drizzling. I was dubious about that, for I have noticed that an ominous sign that I have been uprooted and am drifting again is that I am in a strange place and that it is raining there.

A man came out of a dank wall and begged for the privilege of carrying my two heavy bags. He could only have been evolved by the progressive lines of a highly complex civilization. His mouth was a little open, and perhaps it had not been shut since his last meal, some days before. It was open and waiting for the next, and to save time in coughing. As he was the only visible agent in the strange scheme which had got me to Birkenhead, I invited him to try the luggage. At the word, he took off the belt of his trousers. Why his trousers remained in their place is known only to the powers which were getting me to the Moluccas because, so far as I could see, the man had no stomach; which was lucky for him, as it turned out, because he explained that his average fortune was seven shillings a week, and that, take it by and large, Ypres was as good as the commercial facilities of that fine port. We halved the weight, and trudged off. I saw no signs anywhere of the Far East. All the streets were alike; yet this fellow with me, who never looked up, but stared at the pavement

and breathed hard, seemed to have prior advice as to what to do with me. He knew; for, turning a corner, I saw above dingy roofs a tall funnel of a ship. It was the color of a genuine sky, though its top was black, like the sky we had. From the mainmast head of that hidden steamer the blue peter was flying. "Your ship," coughed the wraith shambling beside me. I was sure he knew. The whole affair was foreordained.

Carefully observe what happened next! That ship had a name out of the Iliad. I had never seen her before. The way to her was cumbered with packages marked for Singapore, and places beyond which we forget after we leave school. Nor could I make out what she was like, from the quay. She was a mass in which white boats were mixed, and a length of black wall, a blue smokestack, two men looking down from a rail, a flag, some round windows with brass rims, a shout or two, a roar that stopped when some cases checked in midair and swung on a pack-thread; a height topped by brown derricks and ventilators. She could not be seen. There was no beginning to her and no end. I went through a door in the upper works of the structure, expecting to be thrown out. That place was nothing to do with me. I could see and smell that. But a man whose smile indicated that he had known me all my life met me in a passage, knew my name, and invited me to follow him. What else could I do? I followed in resignation. He took me to a room. It had been prepared for me. He went to a drawer and handed me some letters whose senders clearly knew where next I would be found. "If you want anything," he said, "touch that button"; and vanished.

Thereupon I surrendered. I sat on the couch and wondered who I was, why all this had happened, how long it would last, what I should do about it, and whether any man since the world began ever knew for certain why and by what means his affairs were shaped for him. I found no answer to this, though the ship hooted once in an insistent way. I took no notice of that till, looking through my round window, I noticed that the shed just outside—a shed which, after all, represented England—was stealing away from me. The shed disappeared. Nothing could be seen then but two ropes, and they were blithely dancing a hornpipe over some hidden joy.

I went outside to see what made them so gay. But the sky was still drizzling. Those dancing ropes were aware of something hidden from me, and I determined to find it. Our ship, which I have reported was a hero of the Iliad, was athwart a great rectangle of water and in the midst of her peers. They stood about her—and here I will declare that though a ship is named after a warrior in a bronze helmet I am not going to call her him—she was, then, in the midst of her peers: Shires, Clans, White Stars, Halls, and her family Blue Funnels. It seemed to me she knew her family tradition and her worth. There was such a stateliness about her, so easy a dignity, and her commands were so peremptory and haughty, that it was clear she had the idea that nothing afloat could deny her house flag.

By the Bar Lightship some steamers we passed were making a fuss about the weather. But our Trojan took no notice of it. I will even confess that off the Isle of Man roast pork was conspicuous on the lunch card, and

that I knew of no reason why it should not be. With the dark obstinacy of its northern character the spring pursued us south. The northwest wind was bleak and sullen. The sun hid his face. We were alone in the Western ocean on the second day. We had the wind and the desolation to ourselves, except for a dozen lesser black-back gulls which were following us because, perhaps, those waters were the same as all the seas of the north, and so it did not matter to them where they were. The surge mourned aloud, sometimes rising to a concluding and despairing diapason. The blue jeans of the sailors busy on the exposed parts of the ship quivered violently in the perishing cold. Once, I remembered, some dauntless men pulled galleys westward through the Pillars for the first time, and then turned northward toward the top of the world. How did they find in that ocean the spirit to maintain a determined course? I do not know. They must have been good men, and hard sailors. I will never believe that the thought of more and easier shekels kept them facing the gloom of those sweeping ranges of water and the bitter heartless wind. It is a lie that men are never moved except by the hope of gain. It is a miserable lie of the money-changers, and it is time to kick their tables outside once more. Why, fellows even as stout as those earliest navigators must have seen in dismay that their gods to whom they had sacrificed would be helpless in seas that were beyond all known things, where they could guess they had entered the realm of the powers of darkness, and that the warmth of human and friendly hearts would go to leeward with the spindrift, and hope could be abandoned. It was while I was seeing this so plainly that a

youth in uniform caught hold of a stanchion and flung himself into the wind toward me. He handed me a familiar yellow telegram. It was from home, praying a good voyage for us. The sightless message had just been picked out of that gale and that sky. I glanced beyond the telegraph messenger, and wondered if he had left his bicycle round the corner.

The English spring gave up the hunt just beyond Finisterre. The sun, glad of the chance, came out to look at us, and made a habit of a magnificent appearance each day at the due hour. We found another wind. It allowed me to loaf on the exposed forecastle head, watch the flying fish glance away from the noisy snow of our bow wash, and listen to the lookout, standing at the stem, answer the bridge when its bell gave the ship's hour. But Ternate seemed no nearer than it did at Birkenhead. It was still an incredible fable, a jest by an old traveler which he tries on the foolish. All the East I had seen so far was no more than three Chinamen squatting on their hams on our after deck, chanting together while one punched a hole in a paint keg and the others admired it; that, and a smell of curry. Anyhow, it was a strong smell of curry.

One morning the lookout signaled land. It was a thin shadow over the port bow. There was no other cloud in the sky. That shadow grew in height, darkened, and closed in on us. Then the shadow of Africa approached our other beam. Toward evening we passed between the Pillars. We may have been no nearer to the Moluccas, but we had escaped from the darkness of the north. That was certain at sunset, when we might have sailed off the waters of earth and were elevated

to a sea where there were no soundings, and logs would be profane. We were not alone there. A felucca was in the vacancy between us and the phantom of a high coast. Our own yellow masts were columns of light. The foam at the bows was flushed with hues never seen in water. And ahead of us, that sea we were to enter was the smooth expanse of an unknown and lustrous element. It was brighter than the sky. From the lower wall of a vault of saffron a purple veil dropped to the rim of a vast mirror. I do not know what was hidden by that veil. It was a dusky curtain circling the brightness and its folds rested on the mirror. Down on a hatch below me some of our fellows started a gramophone with a fox trot.

CHAPTER IV

We had seen the shadow of Crete in the north, and the next noon our ship was somewhere off the Nile. Despite its antiquity the sky was still in its first bloom, and the sea was its perfect reflection. It was easy to feel older than the sky and the sea, for our ship was solitary in the very waters where, out of the traffic in ideas and commodities between Knossos and Memphis, had grown the Athens of Pericles, and Rome and Paris, London and New York. If there is anything to be said of that awful thought, perhaps it would never do to say it here. It may be altogether too late in the day to brood with fond and kindling eye upon the cradle of that particular deep which rocked our childhood into the beginnings of Chicago and Manchester. Let us say nothing about it.

The next sunrise it was the skipper himself who called me. This was a genuinely surprising event. His white figure was even startling, for to me then he had become a senior master mariner in a service so august as our blue funnel, the house flag of which is, I suspect, east of Suez, more potent than the emblems of not a few proud states. The honor was unusual enough to cause me to strike my forehead against the opened port as I sat up respectfully. Our master has been at sea for forty years, so his appearance of weariness and of ironic understanding may mean that his experience of men has been extensive, or it may mean nothing. "We are enter-

ing Egypt," was all he said, while his lean hands rested on the edge of the bunk; he then turned away as if he supposed this sort of thing would never end. But possibly he had been up all night.

There was an apparition of a city over the sea ahead of us. It was so delicate that the primrose of sunrise, deepened in inclosed and quiet waters, might in that place have conspired to produce a mirage of one's bright expectations. That was the gate to all that romantic folk with a meaning eager but scarcely articulate call the Orient. Yet which of us is not romantic when we see it for the first time? I watched that gate heighten and become material as our ship insensibly approached it, till I could read on the seaward brow of this entrance to romance the famous legends, "Topman's Tea" and "Macgregor's Whisky." Port Said, you soon discover, is just like that.

If it is anything at all it is more West than East. A somber flotilla of barges manned by a multitude of dark fiends was waiting for us, and our ship hardly had way off her before she became Tophet with coal dust, unholy activity, and frightful jubilation. It is the privilege of civilized men to give their appetites and repulsions the sanction of reason with its logic, and therefore I did not accept Port Said because I did not like it. It is certainly not the Orient, and I hoped it was not even its gate. Its address and its manners are as abrupt and threatening as is the Stock Exchange to a timid stranger who has misadventured within its sacred precincts. I went ashore, but soon returned to the ship, for I fancied that our Chinamen might be closer to a simple heart than the oblique calculation of that port.

For what are the significant things in travel? Let travelers candidly own up. He is a wise traveler who has few doubts about that, and such a man would be silent, of course, being wise. Who would believe him if he spoke? There was, for example, the French mail steamer close to us at Port Said, homeward bound. Her saloon passengers, the ultimate Parisian reflection of the grandeur that was Rome, surveyed in aloof elegance and in static hauteur the barbaric coarseness of Port Said. But for a chance hint I would most certainly have saluted, as is the Anglo-Saxon habit, the refinement and pride of the folk on the Frenchman's promenade deck as the very luster—which is so hard to attain —of Western civilization's most exquisite stuff. But my glance drew away to the Frenchman's forward deck, and there I saw something which tumbled down my hitherto unquestioned convictions about those qualities which make, as we should put it, the right folk. That deck was loaded with passengers from Cambodia and Cochin China, people of quite another culture—or of no culture. They did not seem to be travelers by deliberation or decision, like ourselves. It was easy to guess they had merely obeyed, like little children, the stern directing finger of fate. They showed no curiosity in us, or in Port Said. They were as still, and as watchful or as indifferent, as delightful images. They stayed where they had been placed. Yet if the French ladies were beautiful, then what shall we say of those little figures? By what means, by what habitual, tranquil, and happy thoughts, did they attain without wish or effort to a countenance which made the refinement and haughty demeanor of the first-class passengers

above them identical with the barbaric challenge and insolence of Port Said? It did not surprise me that for our exhibition of Western enterprise and energy those children of another clime had but shy and mild astonishment. One of them, who might have been an attractive piece of craftsmanship in ivory and ebony, did give to the busy and heated scene the faintest of smiles. A doubt as to what made him smile blurred for me later the enduring testimony to Western skill and activity in the Suez Canal, and even the still more remarkable evidence of our energy at Kantara, a wilderness of abandoned railways and earthworks, with square miles of abandoned airdromes and rusting and sand-blown wreckage, where Anglo-Saxon genius for scientific organization, and British wealth, had built the camp and engines for the last conquest of the Holy Land. It is most disquieting to get a hint that the established way of life of one's kin may be foolish after all, and that there are other ways.

Why should a Cambodian smile have so haunted me that my hope and endurance in travel were not rewarded with the satisfaction I had a right to expect, when witnessing the marvels in foreign lands created there by the superior culture of my dominant race? Did I go to sea for that? Nothing like it. And next morning, when I looked out from my cabin port, there still was the mere canal. Beyond it was the desert, and over that gray and vacant plain was an announcement of the coming sun. The sky was empty, like the desert. Nothing unusual was expected, evidently. But it was only with the first half-awakened glance that I guessed it was the common sun which was to come. In another

instant I was aware that that hushed and obscure land was humbly awaiting its lord. The majestic presence suddenly blazed, and ascended to overlook his dominion. A terrifying spectacle! It would have frightened even a poet in the mood to hail the beneficence of one of man's earliest gods. The glances of that celestial incandescence were as direct as white blades.

In the south, to which we were headed, a high range of Africa's stark limestone crags stood over a burnished sea. The sun looked straight at them. And just above them, parted from their yellow metallic sheen by a narrow band of sky, was the full globe of the declining moon; and the moon herself was no more distant and no more spectral than earth's bright rocks beneath her. It was not surprising that that scene was motionless and constant. There was no wind, there was no air, or all would have vanished like a vision of what has departed. Those luminous bergs shone like copper. Their markings were as clear and fine as the far landscape of a newly risen harvest moon. Suez was not far away, and its lilac shadows were as unearthly as the desert. But there was substance alongside our ship. Some villas were immediately below, arbored in tamarisk and cassia. A few trees in that green mass were in crimson flower. I could smell the burning ashore of aromatic wood. A child in a cerise gown stood under a tree, but she was so still that, like the polished water, like the hills of brass and the city built of tinted shades, she might have been the deceit of an enchantment.

A tugboat rounded a point, shattered the glass of the sea, and the child, released from the spell, moved from under the tree. Men in our ship were shouting. Mail

bags for Singapore, Hongkong, Shanghai, and other places as well defined were thrown aboard. Life began to circulate. These men gave no attention to dead hills and the tyrant in the heavens. I am prepared to believe they would have been incredulous concerning any town about there built of lilac shadows. Our ship rounded away into the Gulf of Suez, the northern corner of the Red Sea.

CHAPTER V

We are aware—though we hardly dare to whisper our knowledge—that even our street at home will, at rare times, give us the sensational idea that we really do not know it. Can it exist in a dimension beyond our common experience? We think we glimpse it occasionally on another plane. This sense, luckily, is but fleeting. We could not support a continued apprehension of a state of being so remarkable. We come down to our beans and bacon, and are even glad to answer the bell to that and the coffee. Well, it is more remarkable of the Gulf of Suez that it permits no certain return to common sense. The coast of Africa, and its Asian opposite, remained within a few miles of our ship all day, as pellucid as things in a vacuum, but as unapproachable as what is abstract and unworldly—the memory of a dead land, though as plain as the noonday sun. There can be no shores in other seas anything like the coast of that gulf. The panorama of heights silently opened and went astern, monotonous, brilliant, and fascinating. In all those long miles there was not a tree, not a shrub, not a cloud, not a habitation. The sky was silver, the sea was pewter, and the high bergs were of graven gold or bronze. The chart informed us of Moses' well, and of Badiat Ettih, or the Wilderness of the Wanderings, and Mount Sinai. "Moses, sir," said the bo'sun to me, "he had enough rock for his

tablets, but that was a hot job he had getting them down." But since those early days and tribulations the land has been left to mankind but as a reminder of things gone. Nobody to-day ever lands on those beaches, on those arid islands. How could they? That we could see the contortions of the exposed strata, and the dark stains thrown by the sun from yellow bowlders on immaculate sands, was nothing. We see, in the same way, the clear magnification of another planet through a glass, but that is as near as we can get to it. There were numerous small islands between us and the shore. They were always glowing satellites of bare ore, without surf, fixed in a sea of lava, and blanched by the direct and ceaseless blaze in the heavens. Unshielded by air and cloud from that fire, they perished long ago.

Our smoke rose straight over the ship's funnel, then curled forward, showering grits. If the hand was placed carelessly on a piece of exposed metal work one knew it. Our bo'sun, who has no expression but a disapproving stare, who never sleeps, who has the frame of a gorilla, and whose long hairy arms, bowed inward and pendent as he walks the deck, are clearly made for balance and dreadful prehensility, admitted to me that it was "warm." Yes. The sprightly fourth engineer appeared from below as I loafed along an alleyway which had the fierce radiation of a nether corridor, and he drooped on the engine-room grating with the air of a fainting girl; he did not call it warm, but that is what he meant.

Night came, and the cabin had to be faced. The hour was made as late as possible, but it came. Reading was not easy. It would not have been easy then for a young novelist to enjoy the press cuttings assuring him

of those original features of his work which distinguished it from that of Thomas Hardy. But the cabin made it no easier to do nothing, for how can one lie sleepless in a bunk and merely look at time standing still because the thermometer has frightened it? Beside me was a book the skipper had lent to me, with a hearty commendation of its merits. "Facts," he had said to me significantly, looking at me very hard. "Facts, my dear sir!"

So it looked. It looked like nothing but facts. Who wants them? What are they for? And the coarse red cover of the book betrayed its assurance in its uncontaminated usefulness. A copy of it will never be found in any boudoir. (This is probably the first reference to it by a critic.) I lifted the weighty thing, took another look at my watch—no hope!—summoned so much of my will as had not melted, and began.

When I awoke the sun was pouring heat again. The decks were being drenched. But my cabin light was burning foolishly and the book was beside me. If already you know something of that special sort of literature which is published exclusively for use in the chart houses of ships, you will understand. And you will know, too, where R. L. Stevenson got much of the actuality which in places lights the ships and islands of *The Wrecker* and *The Ebb Tide* into startling distinction. The pilotage directions for the Pacific were volumes into which Stevenson must have often pushed off, like a happy boy in a boat, to lose himself in that bright wilderness. Yes, and if only the writers of other kinds of books but knew their work as well, could keep as close to the matter in hand, and could show their knowl-

edge, or admit their want of it, with the brief candor and unconscious modesty of the compilers of the works published for mariners by a Mr. Potter, of the Minories, London! I hope that some day I may be able to enter Mr. Potter's shop, where books are published in so unlikely a place as Aldgate, which is Whitechapel way, and press Mr. Potter's hand in silent gratitude, for I am sure there is no phenomenon in nature, not even an exhibition of human gratitude, which would astonish him, or move him indeed to anything more than a perfectly just comment in words not exceeding two syllables each.

I will make no secret of the book which put away the heat for me, and abolished time—for I do not remember looking at the time after 1.30 A.M., when I was still far from sleep, and had been reading steadily for hours. Yet this book no more resembled a best-seller than a chronometer resembles the lovely object out of a prize packet. Its name is *The Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Pilot*—the seventh edition, we may gladly learn of so respectable an exhibition of prose. Its price, I noticed, proved that the truth—or as near to the truth as one should expect to attain—is no more, is really no more, than the price of more doubtful commodities. And let us remember that it is all very well for wise pilots in other and darker seas to assume they may teach young voyagers the right ways in the deceptive and fog-bound coasts of philosophy. Philosophy? That is easy. We may make our charts, then, according to inspiration or desire. But when it comes to advising a mariner where he may venture with a valuable ship, according to her draught, then it is essential that words should be chosen

with care, and the student warned to note with unusual caution every qualitative parenthesis. There can be no casual and friendly agreement to differ about the truth when the question concerned is a coral reef in five fathoms and a ship drawing thirty feet. One must be able to assure a sailor either that his ship can do it, or he must be told that he may not try. Yet with what confidence each of us will venture to pilot others in the more dangerous, the more alluring, and the supremely frustrating elements of morality and æsthetics!

My bed book made no attempt to beguile me. It opened with the simple statement that its purpose was to give "Directions for the navigation of the Suez Canal, the Gulf of Suez, and the central track for steam vessels through the Red Sea, Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, and the Gulf of Aden; also descriptions of the Gulf of Akaba, the African and Arabian shores of the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and the southeastern coast of Arabia to Ras-al-Hadd, the coast of Africa from Siyan to Ras Asir, including the Gulf of Tajura, then to Ras Hafun, Abd-al-Kuri, the Brothers, and Socotra Island."

And Socotra Island! We know the South Pole better than that island, although from prehistoric times every maker of specifics has depended on Socotran aloes. After this simple avowal the book informs its reader that "all its bearings are true, and in degrees measured clockwise from 0° to 360°." Dare we ever ask for more than that? Here was a book which actually declared that its bearings were true and were not magnetic. No work could be more frank. It relied entirely on its reader being a man of honor, of common sense, of skill in his craft, and of a desire so simple that his only care

was the safety of the lives and the property of others. Yet such is the force of habit, which sends us to a book to look, not for the life we know, but for the glory of its falsification, that at first I was inclined to put the captain's volume aside and trust to boredom and the whirring of the electric fan to send me to sleep. But something prevented that.

Here I was, in these very waters; and their uninhabited islands, beaches, and reefs, which had been passing us all that day, were altogether too insistent. These Arabian and African gulfs have more coral to the square mile than any other seas in the world, so, although their shores, during all a day's run, may be rainless and dead, the waters are more alive than the most fertile of earth's fields. Sometimes, when listlessly gazing overside, one was shocked by the sight of a monstrous shape dim in the fathoms. And one evening when the very waves, as though subdued by the heat, moved languidly in hyaline mounds, several black fins began to score their polish. A few dark bodies then partly emerged, gliding and progressing in long, leisurely arcs. As soon as those dolphins saw us they woke up. They began leaping eagerly toward us in the direction of our bows, as though the sight of our ship had overjoyed them. They behaved deliriously, like excited children released from school at that moment. Now, we were used to a small family of these creatures so greeting us. They would amuse themselves for ten minutes by revolving round one another immediately before the ship's stem, weaving intricate evolutions in the clear water so close to our iron nose that one looked for them to be sheared apart. They were so plain that it was

easy to see the crescent-shaped valve of the nose, or blowhole, open whenever a head cleared the water. But the exhibition this evening was phenomenal. Thousands of them—yes, thousands, for I will imitate the *Pilot*—as though they had had word of us, appeared at once, throwing themselves in parabolas toward us, and when alongside breaching straight up, perhaps because their usual curved leap did not take them high enough, and they intended at all costs to get a view of our amusing deck. The level sun signaled from the varnish of their bodies. One of these little whales moved for some time below me, turning up an eye now and then in the way of a swimmer who converses with his friend in the boat. He rolled over lazily, went down, and dissolved in the mystery under us. When I looked up the sea was vacant. Dolphins might never have been created.

This sea was so plainly the setting for legend and fable. Crusoe and Sinbad both would be at home here. I should guess, however, from what we saw of the coast and the islands, that this was more the world of Sinbad than of any level-headed adventurer. Djinns might be looked for in those desolate gorges into which we had glimpses. It would be wrong to pretend that the *Pilot* ever mentioned such things by name, but now and then I suspected in the text fair substitutes for such infernal and maleficent powers. The *Pilot* would check the reader going easily through its pages with an unexpected caution: "The coast from Ras Mingi northwards to Ras Jibeh, a distance of 330 miles, is mainly inhabited by the Jemeba tribe, who generally have a bad character."

But the faithful *Pilot* would allow no harsh judgment on the Jemebas. We ourselves might develop a similar

bearing toward visitors who appeared to be unduly prosperous if we were as poor as the Jemebas, had no boats, and had to "depend on inflated sheepskins" for our "fishing operations." Of certain channels we were advised not to attempt them "unless the sun is astern of the ship and a good lookout is kept." The reefs in this sea do not behave like reefs. They are numberless, but they are rarely marked by so much as a ripple; and that, I can vouch, is true. Their fatal presence may be revealed on a lucky day by a change in the color of the water. For those seamen who are not fortunate when watching for the water to change color the *Pilot* gives advice on what may happen when boats must be beached and help sought. The beach "was formerly inhabited, and remains of dwellings are still to be seen."

CHAPTER VI

I WAS leaning on the rail of the bridge with the master, watching the brown scum, peculiar to the Red Sea, pass alongside with its not really pleasant smell, for it hints that the very deep itself is stagnant and decomposing; and I was foolish enough to tell him that to me the bearings of his excellent book of sailing directions were not only true, but magnetic. He half turned to me sharply, considered this remark and myself for a moment, and then made the noise of impatience in his throat. It was at the hour when we were passing into the Red Sea proper. The Ashrafi Islands were abeam, with Shadwán Island, the greatest of the group, the very picture in little of what this earth will be when its ichor will all have evaporated. Behind the barrier of outer islands is a labyrinth of reefs and coral patches where the signs of danger may be mistaken for the usual mirage, or an innocent and fortuitous shadow may have the obvious face of a genuine reef and thus scare a ship away on a safer course till she runs full upon the real and unannounced rocks. I mentioned to our captain that his book occasionally whispered of a few inexplicable tents to be seen on these uninhabited islands.

"Oh, tents! That's right. A man I know got aground here," he said, "and in half an hour his ship was surrounded by little boats. He never saw the coming of them. There they were. A year or two before the war

a steamer got aground here one night, and at daybreak she was boarded by a big mob. The crew were stripped of their clothes. The Arabs were in a hurry to get the chief engineer's ring, so they cut his finger off. Then they tried to shift a copper steam pipe. Steam was still on, and they took an ax to it. The engineer told me it did his finger a lot of good when the Arabs got down to the steam. The pressure was all right."

Even a deep-water channel of the Red Sea may commit the crime which some think worse than murder—the betrayal and mockery of a confiding trust, of a simple faith in the pledged word, of repose in the moral order of things. A steamer, the *Avocet*, where the chart, the Admiralty chart, and Mr. Potter's *Pilot* allowed her master to rest on the comforting knowledge of deep water, struck a rock. "Naturally the Court of Enquiry," commented my captain, bitterly, "as much as told that man he was a liar about that rock." Our own master exhibited the sort of displeasure which good craftsmen reserve for theorists and experts—the learned men who would debate such a subject as the Red Sea in the Law Courts of London. But even then he did not begrudge them a fair word. "But they didn't suspend his certificate." They sent a gunboat from Aden to search for the rock. The gunboat cruised and dragged for it for three weeks, but the rock had gone. "Got tired," suggested my captain, "of waiting for another ship, I suppose. Went down below for a rest. The gunboat said there was no rock. And there you are, sir. That proved the *Avocet's* skipper was a liar. Couldn't be plainer. Ten months later another ship found it, though she wasn't looking for it. It don't do for a sailor to say

a thing isn't there because he can't see it and has never heard of it before. Give it a margin."

The Red Sea, I suppose, will never be a popular resort. No pleasure, as it is commonly defined, may be found where the shade temperature may rise to 110°, where rain rarely falls, where there is either no wind or a malicious stern wind, where the inclosing shores have no rivers, but only beaches of radiant sand and precipices of glowing metal, and where you are not likely to meet any folk except an occasional tribe with a bad reputation and so poor that it goes fishing on inflated sheepskins. At the lower end of that sea there are a few ports, used mainly by the pilgrims to the holy places Mecca and Medina. And indeed the *Pilot* does not attempt any attractive testimony. Even of such a choice subject as a small island secluded within an unfrequented gulf it is but terse, even exasperatingly brief. It will merely report of it that it "produces no vegetables, except two or three date palms and a few pumpkins. There are a few jackals, gazelles, and wild asses here. Cephalopods are abundant in the surrounding waters, and sperm whales are common."

But is not that enough? Could you get that at Monte Carlo? What more could a traveler wish for as he looks overside at such a coast? What more does he deserve in a world which has become patterned with airdromes and oil tanks? These coasts are no more placable and are little better known than they were to the early navigators. There are large and even populous islands which great ships must pass almost every day that are still as they were when the insatiable curiosity of Marco Polo drew him to so many first views of the

earth's entertaining wonders. For there on our starboard beam, immense on a sea which moved in smooth mounds so languidly that the surface of the waters might have been filmed with silk, rose the battlements of Socotra. I think the last we heard from that island was dated 1848. Yet, the *Pilot* informs us, "it is said to enjoy a remarkably temperate and cool climate." Its capital, Tamrida, is less frequently visited by Christians than Mecca. It should be worth a visit, if one had the heart for it. The town is "pleasantly situated" and its people are mixed of Arab, Indian, Negro, and Portuguese blood. The natives have an unwritten language peculiar to themselves. But we are kept out of so attractive an island because, for one thing, though it is a British possession, both monsoons appear unfeeling about that important fact concerning a land which has no harbors and no safe holding-ground for ships; in addition there is the "unfavorable character of its natives." Is it then surprising that the literature made by tourists in these seas is mainly devoted to arabesques of places like Port Said? A day in Socotra would be worth a year with the Pyramids. And, as it happened, the southwest monsoon was waiting for us. When we had cleared the easterly point of the island it caught us, filled our decks, smashed the crockery, and at night set the mast-heads describing arcs amid the stars.

CHAPTER VII

June 5.—To look down a lane in our village you might suppose that literature was about as likely there as the harpsichord. The narrow pathway (when two of us meet in it we must go sideways) is of wood, and it has white walls and a roof of steel. There are doors all along its length, and it ends at a ladder descending to the afterdeck. The doors are generally open in a friendly way, as though we had no doubt about our neighbors. Some of these doors give on comfortable little sanctuaries in white and mahogany, with blue and orange bunk curtains, electric lamps, and settles on which—should you call on a friend when he is off duty —you may hear enough to keep your own improving knowledge modest and dumb.

There are sections of surprising warmth in that steel passage. You feel no astonishment, therefore, when you come to other doors which do not admit to mahogany and bright curtains, but to the noises and dark business of the pit; you may see, down below, little figures most intent on whatever duties have to be performed about eternal fires and boilers.

Therefore literature? No, nor flower boxes. Besides, this ship and its men are as good as some books, and better than others. In the early days of the voyage I felt no desire to read. Yet one night the initial interest in the novelty of my new home wavered. There was

no sound but the creaking of a piece of unseen gear and the monody of the waters. There was nothing to do, and the last word had been said. That was the time when a book would have helped. But I knew it would be useless to look for aid to the kind of books which go to sea. I recalled other voyages and their chance volumes. Easy reading! Yet to take to sea what has the comical name of "light literature," because that is the stuff to read there, is an insult to one's circumstances, where ignorance and light-mindedness are ever in jeopardy and may be severely handled. Anyhow, I do know that the sea converts that kind of confectionery into sodden, dismal, and unappetizing stuff.

There was nothing for it but patience. Mine had been rather a hurried departure, and, except a few geographical and other reference works, I had nothing with me but a Malay grammar, and so far the grammar had too easily repulsed my polite and insinuating advances upon it. Our ship is an extensive and busy place, managed in a way which shows an exclusive attention for the job, and so I did not betray my interest in literature till one day I saw a cadet with a likely volume. It turned out to be the Iliad, in Derby's translation. I was so impressed that I mentioned this curious adventure to the captain.

He thought nothing of it. "Our ship has plenty of books—part of our gear. Come with me." He showed me a bookcase for the boys—I had passed the place where it stood scores of times and would never have guessed so much was secreted there. Excepting for some transient volumes of fiction, changed whenever the ship is home again, the books in that case would have

shown a country parsonage to have an horizon strangely beyond the parochial confines.

There was the Odyssey, the *Oxford Book of English Verse,* Milton, Wordsworth, Tennyson, *Know Your Own Ship,* Lubbock's *China Clippers,* Green's *Short History,* a history of China, Japanese and Malay grammars, volumes on engineering and navigation. Ball's *Wonders of the Heavens,* the Oxford Dictionary, Wallace's *Malay Archipelago,* books on sea birds, books on marine zoölogy, books enough to keep one hunting along their backs for something else unexpected and good. And in this very place where I had imagined that I was cut off from letters, the captain, casually at breakfast one morning, gave a frank judgment on a recent novel, and his reasons for his opinion were so sparkling and original that I saw at once what is the matter with the professional reviewing of books. In the place where I had guessed that letters were nothing, the significance of the popular reading is such that it would break the heart of a sensational novelist to see it, and might drive him to seek his meat in the more useful mysteries of crochet work.

June 6.—The southwest monsoon has broken. The heat and languor of the Red Sea are being washed from us by the Gulf of Arabia. The decks have been wet and lively to-day. The ship is rolled by quick and abrupt waves heaping along our starboard side. The waters recoil from our bulk, and the sun shining through their translucent summits gives the tumult brief pyramids of beryl. There are acres of noisy snow, and clouds of apple-green foundered deep within inclines of dark glass. Spectra are constant over the forward deck,

where the spray towers between us and the sun, and drives inboard. After a nasty lurch I hear more crockery smash below. One of the other two passengers, the young Scots farmer who has left his Ayrshire oats to see whether rubber trees are better, and who had fancied at the first trial that he was a proved sailor, now seems to miss the placidity of his cows. He groans. At first I was a little doubtful about myself, but bluffed the Gulf of Arabia into supposing that it was a mistake to take me for a longshoreman; yet for a mysterious reason, so uncertain is the soul and its uninvited thoughts, I have had "Tipperary" running through my head all this day —music, one would think, which had nothing to do with monsoons; and thoughts of Paris, and the look of the English soldiers of the Mons retreat I met long ago. Why? How are we made? For here I am, with nothing to remind me of Crépy-en-Valois, climbing companion ladders where ascent and descent are checked at times by an invisible force, which holds me firm to the reality of a ship at sea. And yet "Tipperary," that fond and foolish air, will not leave me. I wish I had the clew to this. After sunset, in a brief wild light, it was a test of the firmness of the mind to be on deck. The clouds, the sea, the horizon, were a great world displaced. The universe with its stars swayed giddily at bonds that threatened to burst at any moment, and away then we should have gone into space. It is darksome to see very heaven itself behaving as though it were working loose from its eternal laws. An anarchic firmament?

June 7.—Bracing myself last night in my cot, from which the ship tried to eject me, I read Kidd's *Science*

of Power. The captain had commended it to me, saying it was one of the best books he had ever read. Now, would it have been possible before 1914 for a book which describes the theory of mankind's inborn and unalterable nature as blasphemous nonsense, and condemns civilization based on force, to win so handsome a tribute from such a tough character as our skipper? Kidd declares that it is the psychic condition of a people which matters, and that their outlook on life can be changed in a generation. He says the collective emotion can be charged for war or for peace. That our captain, who had his share of war, should have been moved by such an idea, need not surprise us to-day. Kidd's theory is proved by our skipper's own eagerness in this new hope. But the prophets and all the artists who have never served in the House of Rimmon have always held that faith, and have worked in its light. Otherwise they would have cursed God and then have cleared out of this world by a short cut. All the material manifestations of our civilization, which are thought to be from everlasting to everlasting, are nothing but the reflections of our commonest thoughts, and may be changed like lantern slides. The better world will be here as soon as we really want it. It depends on how we look at things. I recall a school anniversary, and a brigadier as the central light to shine on assembled youth. He advised the boys to take no notice of the talk about the brotherhood of man; man always had been a fighting animal; war was a fine training for our most manly qualities; with God's help we had to prepare for the next war, which was sure to come; all this peace nonsense was eye-wash. It was plain that

brigadier felt he was the very man to scrawl upon the virgin minds of children, as indeed our applause assured him he was. But suppose we pose the problem of the education of boys on the same plane of intelligence, though from another angle. Let us imagine the governors of that school had invited a painted lady to address the boys, and that she had assured them that they should laugh at this nonsense of the virtue of man, for man is a lecherous animal and concupiscence brings out all his lusty qualities, and therefore they should prepare for riotous nights because all the talk of honor and a fastidious mind is just eye-wash. What would careful parents think of that? But would the outrage be worse than the brigadier's?

We have four cadets, and they make the best-looking group of our company. They move about lightly in shorts and singlets as though they were enjoying life in a delightful world. I stand where I can see them unobserved. They reconcile me to great statesmen, brigadiers, Bottomley, and the strong silent men. It is dreadful to think that soon they may lose their jolly life and become serious lumber in the councils of the world, and very highly respected.

June 8.—Rain came like the collapse of the sky at six o'clock this morning. Numerous waterfalls roared from the upper works as the ship rolled. The weather cleared at breakfast time, and immense clouds walled the sea, vague and still, and inclosed us in a glittering clammy heat. Perhaps it was the heat that did it, but certainly the ship's master revealed himself in another character. Our captain has the bearing and the look of a scholarly cleric. He is an elderly man, with a lean, grave face,

though his gray eyes, when they meet yours, have a playful interrogatory irony. Luckily he is clean shaven, so that I may admire a mouth and chin which would become a prelate. His thin nose points downward in gentle deprecation. A few men, under the bo'sun, were at some job this morning on the captain's bridge, where we have our few staterooms. The bo'sun is a short fellow, with the build of a higher anthropoid. If he began to strangle me I should not resist. I should commend my soul to God. I have not seen him bend iron bars in those paws of his, but I am sure that if a straight bar ever displeases him he will put a crook in it. And he knows his job. He is always waddling about rapidly, glancing right and left with scowling dissatisfaction. There he was this morning on our bridge, where I was enjoying early morning at sea in the tropics while trying to keep clear of the men at work. Our captain stood near me, indifferent to my existence, and apparently oblivious even of the ship and its place in the sun. The bo'sun, growling in his throat, and lifting in indication a brown and hairy paw, was keeping the men active and silent. I don't know what happened. But the captain turned; he regarded for several seconds in silent disfavor the bo'sun, the men, and their job; then there was a sudden blast from him which made all the figures of those seamen appear to wilt and bend as in a cruel wind. The captain did not raise his voice, but with that deep and sonorous tone which in the peroration from a pulpit shakes the secret fastnesses of wicked souls he stated how things looked to him in similes and with other decorations that increased the heat and my perspiration till I looked around for the nearest ladder out of it.

June 9.—I met the chief engineer in an alleyway of the main deck. We stopped to yarn, for we have become no more intimate yet than is possible across the mess-room table. One of his Chinese firemen squeezed past us as we were talking, and the chief's eyes followed him. Then he chuckled. "I found that man below last week with a bit of spun yarn round his throat. He was pretending suicide, and kept up the joke to amuse me. The Chink said, 'Me all same Jesus Clist.' I told him he was wrong. Christ did not commit suicide. Christ was topside man, not a devil. That Chink was quite surprised. He shook his head. I could see he did not believe me. Nothing that I explained to him convinced him that Jesus was not a devil. 'Clist no devil? Velly good.' " The fellow smiled bitterly and shook his head at the joke. It took me some minutes to get at his idea, and from what I could make out that Chink thought it was incredible we should go to any trouble about a good man. Good spirits would do us no harm. People only kow-tow to devils they are afraid of.

June 10.—We are nearing the Laccadives. A dragonfly passed over the ship on the wind. The wind is southwest, and the nearest land in that direction is Africa, over one thousand miles away. Some day a sailor who has a taste for natural history will give us the records of his voyages, and his notes may surprise the ornithologists, at least. Our men caught a merlin in the Red Sea, which was quite friendly, and took its own time to depart when it was released. Another day, while in the same waters, I was looking at a group of Chinese firemen sprawled on the after hatch and was wondering where in England a chance group of workers could be

found to match those models, when a ray of colored light flashed over them and focused on a davit. It was an unfamiliar bird, and I began to stalk it with binoculars while it changed its perches about the poop, till it was made out to be a bee-eater. Then I found the chief mate was behind me, intent also with his binoculars. We had some bickering about it. He said the bird was a roller; but I told him he should stick to his chipping hammer and leave the birds to better men. He said he would soon show me who was the better man, and escorted me the length of the ship to his cabin, where he produced a bird book, which was a log of several long voyages to the Far East. Like so many sailors to-day he is versed in several matters which we landsmen think are certainly not the business of sailors at all. He has been keeping a log of the land birds which he has recognized at sea, and his record suggested what an excellent book a sailor, who is also a naturalist, may write for us some day.

This sailor had observed for himself, what naturalists know well enough, that the gulls are not sea birds at all in the sense that are albatrosses and petrels, and the frigate and bo'sun birds of the tropics. When you see gulls, then land is near, though dirty weather may hide it. The herring gulls, kittiwakes, and black-backs never follow a ship to blue water. When, outward bound, land dissolves astern, then they, too, leave you. You may meet their fellows again off Ushant or Finisterre if your ship passes not too far from the land; but should you be well to the westward, then the ship's next visitors will be land birds when approaching Gibraltar.

Several pairs of noddies kept about the ship at the

lower end of the Red Sea, and not because of anything we could give them except our society. They did not beg astern, like hungry gulls, for scraps, but wheeled about the bows, or maneuvered close abeam like swallows at play. As a fact, I think they were tired and wanted to rest. Once or twice they alighted on our bulwarks and went through some astonishing aërial acrobatics while their tiny webbed feet sought the awkward perch.

After sundown one actually tried to alight on my head, while I stood in the dusk on the captain's bridge watching its evolutions. It swerved and stooped so unexpectedly that I ducked, as one used to at the sound of a shell going over. But soon it alighted behind me, and it made no more fuss about being picked up than though it were a rag. It was only a little sick, but got over that, and settled down on the palm of my hand. A group of shipmates were overworking a gramophone below on a hatch, where lamps made the deck bright. Down went the noddy and I to them. Our visitor cocked an eye at the gramophone and took quiet stock of the men who came round to stroke it. It accepted us all as quietly as though it had known us for years, and this was the usual routine. It heard its mate later, or else our musical records were not to its taste, for it shook itself disconsolately, waddled a little, and projected itself into the night.

Last night the surgeon brought to my cabin another visitor. It was a petrel, about the size of a blackbird, and of a uniform dark chocolate color. We judged it was uncommon, and there was a brief hint of chloroform, which was immediately dismissed, for our cap-

tain might have objected to any modern version of the Ancient Mariner's crime on his ship, even in the name of science. We enjoyed our guest in life till it was pleased to leave us.[1]

June 11.—The south end of Ceylon was in sight twenty miles distant on the port bow at 2 P.M. I did not notice any spicy breeze, but the water had changed to an olive green. The coast was dim as we drew abreast of Dondra Head, but the white stalk of its beacon was distinct and the pulsing light of the combers. We seem to have been at sea for an age. The exposed forecastle with its rusty gear, where I feel most at home, has become friendly and comforting. You are secluded there. You are elevated from the sea and outside the ship. The great red links of the cable, the ochraceous stains on the plates, the squat black winches like crouched and faithful familiars, the rush and gurgle of fountains in the hawse pipes when the ship's head dips, the glow of the deck and the rails, like the grateful warmth of a living body, and the ancient smell, as if you could sniff the antiquity of the sea and the sweat of a deathless ship on a voyage beyond the counting of mere days, give me a deeper conviction of immortality than all the eager arguments from welcome surmises. I am in eternity. There is no time. There is no death. This is not only the Indian Ocean. Those leisurely white caps diminishing to infinity, the serene heaven,

[1] Later, Mr. Moulton, of the Raffles Museum at Singapore, showed me a rarity, one of the six specimens taken of Swinhoe's fork-tailed petrel. Our little friend of the Indian Ocean was at once recognized and named, and his visit to our liner added something new to our knowledge of his kind, for it was unknown that he was likely to be found so far to the westward.

the silence except for the sonority of the waters, are Bideford Bay, too, on a summer long past, and the Gulf Stream on a voyage which ended I forget when, and what Magellan saw in the Pacific, and is the Channel on our first passage across, and they are the lure and hope of all the voyagers who ever stood at a ship's head and looked to the unknown. They are all the seas under the sun, and I am not myself, but the yearning eyes of Man. To-day, when so disembodied and universal, leaning on the rail over the stem, both the confident interrogation and the answer to the mystery of the world, a little flying fish appeared in the heaving glass beneath me, was bewildered by our approaching mass, and got up too late. He emerged from a wave at the wrong angle, and the water and draught flung him against our iron.

CHAPTER VIII

THE voyage down the Red Sea and across the Indian Ocean was hot and long enough for me to forget where I was going and why I was there. I let the idea of The Islands blow to leeward. I had no use for it. I saw I might as well expect to reach the Hesperides. As a legend, The Islands were more thin and indistinct, more remote, less verifiable, than when my steamer, against the cruel hostility of an English spring, backed into the Mersey and stood out to sea. The legend each day retired farther, like good fortune when pursued. That delicate line of the horizon was inviolable. It could not be passed. For Magellan and Drake it was all very well to pursue such ideas. Their ships were different. Mine was a high confusion of white boats, black ventilators with blue throats, indeterminate shapes, ladders coming out of nothing and leading nowhere, a cerulean factory stack, and yellow derrick standards holding out stiff arms above a black central structure which appeared to have no beginning and no end. My ship was too big and complicated for me to be reassured by the scientific design which held it together.

And there was the master of our ship. He had grown gray in the East. He knew China and Japan, Java, Sumatra, and Macassar. But he shook his head over Tidore and Timore Laut, as though I were talking to him of a Perfect System or of lost Atlantis. He admitted

he had heard of such places. But naturally! We all have heard, as Raleigh once heard, of the City of Gold. Yet where is it? Should we waste the time of a practical seaman on his own navigating bridge with idle talk of it? Raleigh, as we know, found his city. And what was it? Monkeys and trees. My questions to the captain about The Islands, I can see now, were like an eager display of little green apples to a seaman of long experience. My last question he did not even answer. He could not answer it. A cloud, which had quickly made midnight of the morning ahead of us, burst over the ship. She vanished in hissing smoke. My voice was drowned in the roar of waterspouts and the blaring of the siren. Presently she began to take shape again, and through the thinning downpour we could see the figure of the lookout at her head. She fell also most curiously silent as the black squall passed astern with a white foot to its curtain. The captain began to answer me when my last question was twenty minutes old. He took off his oilskins. "You talk," he said, "as if you were on the Underground Railway. Those Islands"—he waved his arm eastward where there was still only a haze—"you couldn't see them in a lifetime. Not in two lives. Some are great countries, and some are three cocoanuts, and the ocean is full of them. They are like stars in the sky. There's thousands of them. Now just look at that!"

The now translucent murk of the storm over our starboard bow remained opaque in one place. Part of the weather there had a pyramidal form and was darker. The weather lifted, but this obscurity remained on the sea. The sun colored and shaped it as we drew near

and what had appeared to be a denser mass of the storm was revealed as a forest falling straight out of a cloud to the surf. The summit of the forest was in the sky, and the combers of the Indian Ocean swung into caverns overshadowed by trees at its base. "That is the first of them," said the captain. "There's Pulo Way."

I at once abandoned all my stock of notions about the Malay Archipelago. It was useless. I had only that morning found on the chart, for the first time, the island of Way. It was an idle speck lost beside the magnitude of Sumatra. One might have expected to pass Way without seeing it, or perhaps suppose it was a barrel adrift. Yet for twenty minutes we were steaming beside this oceanic dot whose summit was in heaven. Deep ravines and valleys unfolded in it. The wall of its jungle stood along its water line, or just at the back of an occasional strip of golden beach. I could see but one house, and that was near the eastern end of it, among some cocoanuts. Perhaps it was the illusion of a house. But there was no sign of humanity. Perhaps Way, too, was a mirage. It had suddenly appeared on the empty ocean, born out of a storm. Now it was passing astern, silent and unreal, apparently no more approachable, this first of the Malay Islands, than any other of those bright dreams which we cherish when young, but which pass, and are lost. To starboard all day among the changing continents of cloud one towering shape of dark vapor persisted. Our skipper said that that was a mountain top in Sumatra; but you know what sailors are. Once a nipa palm drifted close to us. It looked

much more substantial than Pulo Way, or than any distant Sumatran summit.

At dinner that night the open rounds of our saloon ports were disks of fathomless violet. When I looked up from the yellow glow of the table lamp to those dim circles I thought we were being steadily watched by the enigmatic eyes of a mystery, lovely but awful, and so lost much of the talk. The captain and the chief engineer were in solemn dispute. It is in such adventitious trifles, casual and valueless, that one gets the best things in travel. Now and then the violet changed to a vivid and quivering green light. But there was no thunder. The mystery did not speak.

We came to the coffee. Our captain, taking up his white cap from his bench, a sign that he has had enough of us, leaned back and severely reprimanded the chief. The chief, who is a young man, happens to be an insoluble agnostic. He is quietly and obstinately confident in his denial of everything but experience. Our elderly captain has voyaged long enough to learn, I suppose, that though what men call hard facts must be treated with respect and caution, yet one can never be quite sure. "Look at my charts, my Admiralty charts, covered all over with experience. Do I trust them? No, sir. I reckon they haven't got everything down on the charts." You should know that we were discussing whether, when a man dies, he then chiefly lives, or whether, as the engineer put it, "he goes to the bottom, through the ash chute."

Our captain said he didn't know. But he was just as sure that no thumb-polluted, condemned, dog-eared, fuliginous pocket book of formulas used by engineers

had got it down in plain figures; or some words of a similar import. "I don't know. You don't. Nobody knows."

The engineer looked at the misty electric fan and made bread pills. His face suggested he had heard all this from his youth up; that he knew baffled controversialists invariably escaped from the last corner in such cloudy and sentimental muslin, like an angry woman who is in the wrong, but is pretty. Our chief would no more accept a Christian statement than he would believe the proffered pearl of a Levantine peddler was of great price. But he is a polite young man. He rarely does more than smile faintly at the case you put, as he would at the pearl. He refers you instead to Darwin, or Huxley, or Andrew Lang, or the *Golden Bough*. He has read widely within his favorite province. He goes over every statement separately, with a fine gauge, to see whether it will fit accurately into his system. If it does not, then away it goes. The captain had risen slowly over us, lean, tall, and sardonic, and with no sign that he was suppressing himself except that I discovered I was now more interested in his hard gray eyes than in the violet eyes of the tropic night. The chief at this moment referred the captain to one of those Victorian iconoclasts whose books load cupboards and chests in his own cabin. The captain instantly recommended him to a more Rabelaisian diet. In this contest of characters it was curious to note the difference between the well-read logician and the man of a literary temperament. The captain has not read the *Golden Bough*, and, I suppose, never will. But his candid simplicity, nevertheless, had foreknowledge of much that the engineer had

to tell him, and was unsatisfied. He still insisted on the need and even the common sense of—as he called it—"a margin to play with." "After all, what do you clever fellows know? God himself is hidden in what you don't know. There's plenty of room. Nobody can tell how much there is beyond the half dozen pebbles you've picked up on the beach."

"Nobody," said the chief—"nobody has ever come back to tell us, anyhow. They go, and they don't come back to us."

"Well, why the hell should they?" demanded the tall figure at the door, turning its head over its shoulder. "Why should they? Who would understand 'em if they did? Would you? What they would tell you would be outside your experience and all wrong, of course."

The chief fingered his napkin ring, stared into vacancy, as if talking to such a man, especially when the man was the ship's captain, was useless, and he would waste no more time. Lightning glimmered at the ports. The steward upset a plate of fruit. While his eye watched a rolling orange the captain continued: "There's more sense in some comic songs than in a lot of your deductions from experience. What have you experienced? About enough to warn a nipper against playing with fire." Then he disappeared in the alleyway. The chief said nothing. With well-disciplined weariness he adjusted his napkin ring to a design in the tablecloth. He then looked at me fixedly—but I gave no sign of partisanship—and finished his coffee.

On deck there was only a vibration, and irrelevant sections of our security that were revealed faintly golden in darkness. Our captain stood by himself, a white

wraith at the end of the bridge; and even in his ghostliness I could see he was not in need of further communication from any foolish shipmate. But his cheroot smelled friendly. The young officers and engineers of the deck below were clasping one another luxuriously while waltzing to the gramophone. Some of them had abandoned all the dress they did not want. The mask of a Chinaman appeared in the night near me, detached and bodiless, regarded me for an instant with profound melancholy, and then dissolved. I went below to my own seclusion.

A long voyage is chiefly weather and gossip. It gives a traveler the impression of being irrelevant and aimless. The men keep busy about the ship because there is nothing else to do. A sullen word, the least significant of unfriendly gestures, are noted with the reproach that is fixed on an adverse set of the current; it is so gratuitously alien in its opposition. Travel is delightful in the morning, with a young sun giving the sparkling sense that all is new and for the first time, and that shadows are, after all, but a sport of happy light. By the afternoon that freshness has gone, and one suspects the ship is uselessly rocking without progress, fixed in the clutch of some sleeping but eternal power which has forgotten, or does not know, that men do not live forever. One would then destroy Time, the tyrant, and with his own scythe, if suddenly he turned into an alleyway bearing his damnable glass. And when, after dinner, there is no longer any excuse for staying in the saloon, when it is three bells, and the boys have got tired of giving the gramophone on the hatch jazz stuff to rotate, and you can see the spark by the rail amidships where

the chief's pipe accompanies him while he gazes into the night and contemplates finality and futility—then, then, one has to face the ghosts from other times and of vanished scenes which gather in one's cabin at that hour, confident that it is their place also, and that the man they know is sure to come. And he comes. Hail, the ghosts of the middle watch! You never signed the articles. You were not seen coming aboard. You never appear on deck. The voyage has nothing to do with you. Only one man knows that you haunt us. But are you the reality, or is the ship?

CHAPTER IX

We are in the Strait of Malacca. I have a fine confused romantic feeling this morning, like that of a child just before the curtain rises on the "Forty Thieves." My memory is a splendid muddle of the long drama which opened when Vasco da Gama rounded Good Hope, reached Calicut, and found the way to Cathay; and of d'Albuquerque, St. Francis Xavier, Camoens, sultans, massacres, sieges, Drake, Cornelius de Houtman, Sir Stamford Raffles, and the various East India companies, some honorable and some foreign. According to the *Malay Annals*, Malacca must have been a sleepless city. The Malays themselves, without the expert assistance of the Portuguese, knew how to find amusement. There was the prince who played at Malacca with the son of the prime minister till the prince stabbed his playmate, who had knocked off the royal hat. It was a serious matter in Malacca to knock off a superior hat, or to have a beautiful daughter whom you would not sell to the Sultan. One sultan, finding a rival at the house of his own pretty lady, bestowed a quid of betel on one of his young men. The youngster knew. He krised the rival. The head of the house of the murdered man took a violent interest in this, so the Sultan, in the cause of peace, sent the obedient young assassin to his discontented subordinate chief, naturally expecting a pardon to follow such an act of unnecessary

courtesy; but the chief split the murderer's head with an elephant goad. "The court was thronged with foreign adventurers . . . mahouts with Indian names, Afghan bravos, Tamil merchants ready to bribe even the Prime Minister." Could d'Albuquerque improve on that? Certainly not; though he did his best.

What, then, could I be expected to make of it, with the purple silhouettes of the Dindings a few miles to port against the clearing sky of morning? It is better, with such annals to go upon, to leave the fine confused feeling of high romance where it is, for all the noble muddle of the world is romantic; we have amassed enough to last us to the end. Jarra island was ahead, an inky cone against a wall of thunder. The sea was livid. Our men were busy rigging gear to the derricks; we are nearing port, and I must pack up to-day. Yet those *Annals* so accorded with that lustrous sea and ominous sky inclosed by the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra, as though the scenery were left when the actors departed, that I felt we were only just a little too late for the play, and remained on deck from sunrise to sunset in case a late caravel should pass; but all had gone, and we were alone. When the sun went and my vigil was over, he left with us a glow that was so like day that I thought it might last till he came again. But chiefly that radiance was absorbed in the level apple-green water of soundings that expanded toward Sumatra as far as where a loom of storm was a high cobalt barrier. Ahead of us, toward Malacca, there was a haze, suffused with a light of rose in which the islands were lower embers. After all, sultans and Portuguese adventurers, even with the aid of Camoens, were insignificant beneath the tremen-

dous drama of that sky of the tropics when night invaded day.

Before the next day broke in the Strait of Malacca it looked as though the east was now barred from us by the enormous battalions of tempest. They were camped about the horizon, a sleeping but ghastly host, waiting for day to announce the assault and for the wind to lead them. The sea was stilled, as though appalled by the look of the sky. But no wind came with the sun. The dark impending threat did not break on us. Its smoke and waiting thunder became a purple wall on which the sooty streamers were changed to orange and pearl. Here we were, approaching Singapore.

We might have reached the peaceful end of the sea, or perhaps its tranquil beginning, for that delicate surface might never have been broken by any violence. It was inclosed by a circle of islands, some of them high and solid, with deep reflections in the glass, and others but black tracings of minute trees afloat, growing miraculously upright out of the tenuous horizon. A launch turned a point and projected itself at us. Two black lines diverged from its stem widely over a pallid tide. At its head stood the statue of a Malay in a *sarong*, holding a boat hook, and the statue became alive as the launch disappeared under our side where a Jacob's ladder was hanging. And next, a pair of hairy freckled hands appeared at our bulwarks, and pulled up a man in a suit and helmet incredibly white. He had a sandy beard. He looked up at our bridge and nodded to it while brushing his hands together to rid them of our ship's grit, an act which had the air of a polite visitor's absent-minded disapproval. He went by a group of us,

this pilot, as though he had been meeting us like this every morning for years, and was rather tired of it, these hot days, but hoped we were all right. We came alongside a quay. The *Trojan* touched land in tentative and friendly way, as though to assure herself that she was really there.

To leave the sea and to land at Singapore is as serious a matter as taking a man out of a long seclusion and releasing him from a closed vehicle in Piccadilly Circus. Molten light poured over the swift kaleidoscopic movements of a street where the first thing I saw was a large cart drawn by a small white bull with an excusable hump; his eyes were full of flies. The sun had struck down the long ears of the animal. But no sooner did I note the flies than the bull vanished, or became a Chinaman running silently in front of an austere European lady who was perched high on a pair of noiseless wheels. Then a Chinaman began to run silently in front of me, while I sat behind him much too high on a pair of noiseless wheels, watching the dark patch of sweat expand on the back of his shirt; anyhow, I must suppose it was I who sat there. We nearly knocked over a yellow lady in black-satin trousers and a blue jacket who was smoking a cigarette. Next, so far as I remember, there were a great many masters of ships and perhaps as many cocktails. We came to a spacious black-and-white palace with a myriad propellers revolving on its ceiling—no wonder I was dizzy—and a string quartette regulated our hunger with dance music while a regiment of immaculate Celestial acolytes accurately guessed our wants. I remember, that night, a confusion of narrow alleys, where hanging lanterns disclosed end-

less and aimless torrents of brown bodies. There were the rank smells of abundant life in heat and ferment, and cries and voices without meaning. Above grotesque cornices were the shapes of monstrous leaves blacking out areas of stars. All this, when I found a bedroom, I tried to resolve into an orderly pattern; but there can be no ordering of the upburst and overflow of life at its source. I gave it up, and watched instead some lizards running after one another upside down on the white ceiling, while they made a noise like intermittent loud hissing.

CHAPTER X

He had skimmed about Singapore in a jinrickshaw all the morning. He wanted to find Mr. Kow Watt Loon. That Chinaman was as elusive as the glamour of the East. And he was not used to 'rickshaws. He was sure he looked a lazy fool when being dragged about in the heat on a high perch and a pair of silent wheels by a sweating fellow creature. It had been nearly a week before he could summon the courage to travel in a little cart drawn by another man. It made him feel like the hated subject of a revolutionary cartoonist's satire.

He could not find Mr. Kow Watt Loon, who kept a pawnshop somewhere in Singapore, so he had been told, where Kelanton *sarongs* of silk were to be found occasionally, rare krises, and silverware from the Linga Islands. Not that Mr. Loon would be sure to sell those things if his shop were found and if he had them, for he was reported to be suspicious and morose; an embarrassing shopkeeper who would forget all his English and decline to sell to you if he misliked your appearance. But Mr. Loon could not be found; and a city near the equator is much more extensive, relatively, than a city with a wholesome climate. Singapore's streets in their heavy and slumbering heat seemed to his despairing eye prolonged to an impossible distance. Oh, Heaven! Where was this Mr. Loon?

This coolie was the third experiment that morning

with a 'rickshaw. Young Bennett from London, in his quest of the romance of the East, watched below him the old man's back muscles playing under the glistening drab skin. He ought to tell the old fellow to walk—to stop. It was too hot for this game. Besides, the coolie didn't know where to go, though he pretended he did; no doubt he was merely running about. They always did that. The first, picked up near Raffles Place, was a bronze giant, a wonderful youngster, whose hat was a round straw thatch with a pinnacle. As soon as he was spoken to he made cheerful noises of understanding, lifted his shafts in confident play, took a strange side turning promptly (how lucky—this fellow knew!), loped off swiftly, and they were completely lost in ten minutes, though Bennett did not know that at the time. His coolie loped along swiftly but leisurely. That running figure and its style would have inspired the poets of old Athens, but in the romantic East it was only a blob of life. The sun and the easy gait infected the passenger with a haughty languor. The coolie's pale-blue cotton shorts and shirt became dark and limp with sweat; but the fellow ran on, deliberately, unerringly, taking unlikely byways into queer seclusions where brown life poured in noisy streams. Evidently this fellow knew where to go. . . . But did he? Or did he just run on? Where the devil were they? *Brente!* Stop! As cheerful as ever, sweating but fresh, that coolie did not appear to know where he was, and evidently his glad smile would be unchanged even in death. He was an imbecile.

The second coolie, who had stopped to be entertained by the language thrown at the first, was a lean and

elderly man, and big veins corded his arms in a mesh. His torso was bare. He ran his 'rickshaw elsewhere, occasionally looking back over his shoulder doubtfully at his fare. He was shy of any street in which he saw the khaki uniform of a Malay or a Sikh. That journey came to nothing in a strange market place in the middle of a horrible smell. The coolie walked to a curb; there he gently rested his shafts, turned and shook his head dolefully, and held out his hand for largess.

Another hour wasted! It was blazing noon, and a row of Chinamen were squatting in the shade, eating slops from basins with two sticks. They did not even look up. The naked children at play did not appear to see him. Nobody in Singapore knew anything, and did not care what happened to anybody. He had never seen this part of the city before. Was it Singapore? It might have been the grotesque country of a dream, all these people inimical shadows who did not even glance at their victim, and he the only live man, caught in an enchantment, lost and imprisoned in an illusion where the face of things had a meaning which he could not guess, though it was important for him. The man from London wiped the perspiration from his hands and looked round. A high wall was opposite, with a gateway, and crouched on the top of the wall, on either side of the opening, were two big bulls in pink stone. In the shadow on the pavement beneath were heaps of colored rags, fast asleep. Was that a temple to Siva? It was then that the third 'rickshaw man entered the dream, stopped and looked at Bennett as though he knew at once the man for whom he was seeking, and drew near seductively. This figure of evil, its face

pock-marked, had only a rag about its loins and his 'rickshaw was a self-supporting wreck. Well, it would serve to escape from those pink bulls and that unmoving smell. By luck, too, they might pass into a part of the city he recognized, and then he would be released from the spell and wake up. But he went farther, and saw nothing that he knew. He was abandoned under some cocoanuts, and outside the city, by the look of it.

The road was empty, except for a bullock cart at a standstill. A haze of little flies quivered about the sleepy heads of the two animals, and the shadows under their bellies were black. The dark folk, Klings and Malays, who padded by occasionally, were probably in another world. They were certainly not in his. He could not speak with them. The heat was so still and heavy that he felt he could not move in it, especially as he did not know which way to take.

"Can I help you? Are you looking for anyone about here, sir?" The voice was so like Oxford that it exorcized the spectral East completely; for a moment it steadied his bewilderment in the midst of what was quick, but was alien and enigmatic. He was too surprised to answer at once, but in the shade of those palms stared at a young fellow who was so attractively dressed in neat and unctuous white, with a flourishing black silk bow to a collar not in the least stained, though the heat was many hours old, that Bennett felt mean and soiled in the regard of that friendly curiosity. Bennett explained. He was lost. He had been unable to make the 'rickshaw men understand. What he wanted now was the Europe Hotel.

"Some distance, the Europe. This is the Ayer Laut

Estate. Sorry, but our cars are out. Would you come with me? Then we can telephone to your hotel."

They went off through somber avenues of sleeping trees. Their trunks were scored with pale scars and under the wounds were stuck small glass cups. His companion said nothing, but strode briskly forward. The crepuscular aisles were deserted, though Bennett noticed that he and his companion were not alone in that silent and shadowy plantation. But what were the figures he could see in the distance he did not know. They might have been Dryads, those slender and motionless forms in robes of scarlet, orange, and emerald, who were intent on some ritual among the trees. They were retired into the twilight quiet of the aisles, and seemed unaware of the intruding Englishmen. But Bennett was startled by one of those figures. It had been hidden by the gray column of a tree near the path. As he went by it raised its head, with its piled black hair and a gold comb diminishing its dark and delicate face, which had a gold stud in the bold curve of a nostril. Her drowsy eyes looked at him, but he remembered only the spot of gold in her nose, and the astonishing orange of the silk wound round her lithe figure.

They came to a house in a shrubbery of crotons, and ascended a flight of wooden steps to a veranda. A Malay was there, crouched in the portico; but he might have been inanimate. His gaze was fixed beyond them. And the house was deserted. Their footsteps made an embarrassing din on the boards. Bennett with his brisk friend, who seemed to know exactly what to do, went to an upper room, open to the air on three sides, and overlooking everywhere the green roof of the plantation.

The skin of a tiger was on the floor. Its head grinned toward the door in shabby and fatuous defiance. Dusty native weapons were disorderly on the wooden partition at the back. There was a picture of Salisbury Cathedral hanging next to a photograph of a dead elephant with a man nursing a gun sitting on its head.

"Wait a minute," said the young fellow in white, and went to the most noticeable object in the dingy and neglected apartment, a bright telephone instrument. He leaned against the wall in superior and casual attention with the receiver to his ear. While waiting like that, suddenly and brusquely he spoke to Bennett.

"I say, sorry, what's your name?" Then he turned in a tired way to the instrument, murmured softly and allusively to the wall for a few seconds, and came away. "That's all right. The car will be here presently. I must go. But you wait here. Whisky and soda on that sideboard. Make yourself at home"; and he was gone.

Bennett sat down. Signapore was an unexpected sort of place. He felt imprisoned now in the silence. Nothing moved. There was no sound but once, when a wasp as big as a bird bolted in heavily, blundered and hummed among the wooden rafters, and went again so straight and suddenly that Bennett thought something in the overhead shadows had flung it out. He began to feel bitter about that romance of the East. Sometimes it seemed lost in a brooding quiet, or else it stirred into episodic and irrelevant activity directed to God knew what. He put his sun helmet on the floor, wiped his brow, and regretted the childish folly which had sent him to look for what perhaps did not exist on earth. What did people mean by romance? What

was it? How could it be found in 'rickshaws and rubber plantations? He could not get the hang of Singapore. Ships, temples to all the gods, cocoanuts, and men and women of so many different colors that they could not talk to one another. And who was that fellow who had just gone out? How did he come into the picture? It was a life which went on outside his own, and he could not follow it. Didn't even know that fellow's name. He might have been created among those trees just to let a Londoner know that the East, though it pretended never to observe him, yet wanted him to understand that he was making a fool of himself in a place not his. He might as well have some of that drink.

The siphon made so immense a noise that he thought the invisible watchers must hear it and send another messenger to mock him politely. He began to drink gratefully.

"Mix me one," grumbled a deep voice.

He almost dropped the glass, and looked round in a little panic. He could not see anybody. A lounge chair with its back to him stood by the veranda at the far end of the room. He went to it. An old man, with a mass of riotous white hair and a white beard stained brown about the lips, reclined there at full length. His eyes were shut. His open shirt showed gray hair on his ribs.

"Did you speak?" asked Bennett.

"Of course," said the man, without opening his eyes. "You heard me. I want a drink."

Bennett brought it. The old man sat up sideways in his chair with surprising swiftness, opened his eyes at the glass in sullen criticism, and emptied it at once. He

sat looking at the tumbler thoughtfully, while Bennett stood by, hoping that the car would arrive soon. Then the bearded figure looked up at him and surveyed him with dark disapproving eyes.

"Who are you?"

Bennett felt very modest. "Oh—nobody—just out from London. I found this estate by chance—got lost, you know. A good friend here, whose name I don't know, has telephoned for a car."

"Well, Mr. Nobody, sit down. No. Get me another drink. Put more whisky in it."

Bennett was meekly obedient.

"Now you can sit down. Go on. Sit down."

Bennett felt that the heat of the day was much worse as he took a near chair. The stranger flung up his glass again with the suggestion that the liquid must fall into a hollow, held the tumbler away from him, turned it about reflectively, put it on the floor, and lay back, closing his eyes. He sighed. His feet were bare, except for a pair of crimson slippers which hung loosely from his toes. Bennett listened through five minutes of tense silence for sounds of an approaching car. The figure reclining on the chair then opened its querulous eyes, raised its head, and spoke.

"My name's Hopkins. Ever heard of me, Mr. Nobody?"

"No, sir. I'm afraid not. I'm only just out, you see."

Mr. Hopkins chuckled in his beard. "Then don't stop unless you want to.

"Never heard of me," mumbled Mr. Hopkins, several times. "Never heard of me."

This old fellow, thought Bennett, is not in his right

mind, and here I am, told to wait till somebody comes for me, though I'm not sure that they know I'm here. How can I keep this graybeard amused? He's a truculent old ruffian. Bennett looked out over the treetops in the sun. The crowns of some palms were individual above the mass of green. They were lifeless. A bird or something was calling, "Raup, Raup." What could he talk about to an old reprobate like that?

"What ship did you come out in?" asked Mr. Hopkins, playing with the end of his beard.

"The *Trojan*." The young man relapsed at once into a bankrupt memory.

Hopkins stared at him fixedly, as though waiting. "Well, is that all? But I suppose it is. You came out, and here you are. That's how it's done. Not in my time, though. Not when I was alive."

"Have you been here long, sir?"

"Me? I've been here too long. Seen too much for some of them. I'm old Hopkins—but what's the good of talking to you? You just came, and here you are." Mr. Hopkins rubbed his bare ribs plaintively. "The ships I knew couldn't just come and go." He leaned forward with one of his sly chuckles, and looked round furtively while secretly enjoying a recollection. "I was in the *Nellie Bligh*." He nodded his head at Bennett, and watched for the full effect of his news.

Bennett smiled awkwardly, but nodded back to his companion appreciatively. It was better to keep him in a good humor.

"Yes. You don't know what ships are like, not you fellers. Nor men. No Billy Ringbolts now." Mr. Hop-

kins began to shake in silent laughter over something that had occurred to him.

"Oh, I don't know, Mr. Hopkins. I've heard about the clippers, and Whampoa, and Java Head. But I never saw a sailing ship during all the voyage out. Not one. And yet I know the East India Dock Road, too."

Mr. Hopkins looked startled for a moment. "Poplar," he mumbled. "You say you know the Dock Road! And not a sailing ship." His beard about his mouth continued to move, as though he were talking to himself.

"The *Nellie Bligh* came out from Poplar," mused Mr. Hopkins. "So did I. But not in her. She found me in Java because—well, because I was there." The old man looked very artful and amused.

"She picked me up at Sourabaya. She was in the coolie trade to the Chinca Islands then, and her skipper was a Chilean. She was going to China to take in coolies. Ever heard of the trade? You were paid for what you delivered. So it was no good taking in just enough to fill the ship. Some died."

Bennett smiled politely at this little joke. "Some died, did they?"

"The *Nellie*," went on Mr. Hopkins, "was not the ship to choose if you knew of a better. I didn't. She was all Dago, but there are worse things. We got up to China—are you listening?—I say we got out all right. She found her own way, though she nearly finished up on Borneo. The wind fell and she was set inshore on a current. . . . What a damn noise those big wasps make! There's another just come in. . . . Did you hear of a man named Smollet in London? I'm told he's often in the papers, very important, and gives a lot to the mis-

sionaries. So he ought. Buying off his dad below, I suppose. His dad was in the coolie trade. I know. I didn't do so bad, myself. But the missionaries get nothing out of me. I wouldn't worry over a few Chinks more or less. They're not human. We took in three hundred on the *Nellie*. One of 'em looked at me as he came aboard. After that I went to have a look at the hatch gratings—I wanted to see whether they were sound and handy."

Mr. Hopkins sank back languorously on his long chair, closed his eyes, and lapsed into silence. His long bony hands were folded limply on his bare chest. Somewhere outside, a bell sunk in the depths of the foliage began to toll. The silly story was finished, Bennett thought. There was a smell which reminded him of incense. Mr. Hopkins's cane chair creaked. Where was that car, to get him out of this?

The old man began to drawl again. He spoke with his eyes shut, as though wearily confessing his sins. He looked like a dying man, too, Bennett thought, for his white beard hung from cheek bones that were projecting eaves, and the skin of his long hooked nose was so white over the sharp bridge that a touch might have broken it. His eyes were pits, with white bushes overhanging their shadows. One of his slippers fell to the boards. "It was lucky we sighted the Pelew Islands. Our old man might have passed muster for a sailor with a fair wind and plenty of room. If ever he knew where he was he must have guessed it. But he was the admiral of the Pacific in good weather. Three days after we sighted the Pelews, near eight bells in the morning, the *Nellie* was doing so well that I wasn't so sorry as I

had been that I'd left Java when I had to. I'd forgotten we had any Chinamen aboard. Just as eight bells was being struck there was a howl below, like a man knifed. Then I heard a rush and I looked down. The Chinks were swarming for the deck. They hung on the ladder like bees and were armed with boards they'd stripped from below. The first of 'em was scrambling over the coaming close to me. I lifted him clean by his pig-tail and dropped him on the others." The old man smiled in his sleep. "We made those hatch gratings fast, somehow. We got the Chinks booked. Wolves would have looked prettier. Their faces were turned up and they were howling at us. Then a pistol went off. That Dago in his gold lace had come at last. He was trembling and whimpering, and firing pistols into those faces. It made the noise worse. The Chinks began to leap and scream." Mr. Hopkins paused and rubbed the hair about his mouth slowly.

"As one jumped a shot caught fire to his shirt, and it was funny to see the way he tore the burning rag off his arm. But it wasn't so funny when I saw that chap pushing through the crowd, blowing on the rag to keep it alight. I half guessed his game and grabbed a pistol for a go at him. He dropped, but another Chink snatched the burning rag from his hand and got away with it." Mr. Hopkins opened his eyes in a smile. "Wanted to light his pipe, eh?"

A motor horn sounded in the grounds. Then a Malay appeared. "Tuan Bennett. Motor pergi Europe."

"Thank you, Mr. Hopkins," said young Bennett, rising slowly, for he feared it might be polite to wait for the end of the story, supposing it were not ended.

"Good-morning." Mr. Hopkins did not speak. He was staring into the rafters.

The quick journey to the hotel gave Bennett the impression that it had been in hiding just round the corner all the time. What he had seen and heard that day might have been the recollections, unreasonable, unrelated, and prolonged to no end, which are jumbled in the mind when one wakes up and sees in surprise the familiar objects of the plain morning. "Another day wasted," thought Bennett. "I don't spend one more hour of it looking for romance. I doubt whether the East has got any. All gone before I got here." He thought he would bathe, and then sit on the veranda; waste the rest of the day looking at the world till dinner-time. He sat in that corridor, a long shady vista of wicker chairs and marble-topped tables, where men and women of his own kind, as much apart from the East as he was himself, gossiped idly as though waiting for the hour when they could escape. Apologetic Chinamen in white uniforms were gliding about like ghosts, ministering to weary guests. The broad thoroughfare outside moved in silent eddies of jinrickshaws and motor-cars. Bennett was amused by a Chinaman in goggles so fat that he filled the perch of his 'rickshaw, sitting there with his short legs wide apart and a child like a solemn idol on one knee. The little coolie who drew them was trotting along limply with his mouth wide open. A group of Klings stalked by, figures with long black hair and smooth faces, each in a stiff cocoon of frail colored cloth. Were they men or women? A gigantic Sikh domineered with the traffic at the corner. Across the road, fringing the turf of the esplanade, flat-topped trees

were in crimson bloom, a line of gigantic flambeaux. Through their columns he could see the roadstead, a plain of burnished pewter to which were fixed the black shapes of a few ships, a barque, some sampans, coasting steamers like toys, high-pooped junks, all distinct and remarkable, even when they were far out toward the indigo islands beyond. The sun was setting. Immense purple clouds piled from the horizon like the vapors of a planet which had burst, smoke too heavy for any wind to disperse and shot with the glow of exposed internal fires. They were high enough to kindle the sky. The sky was burning. Lightning was exploding in the summits of the clouds. The ships and the sea were suddenly caught, too, and the surprised faces of the watchers on that veranda reflected the glow of a vast catastrophe. The fires died. The islands congealed to cold iron. The only light was the quivering opalescence of the storm in high clouds. A group of Chinamen went by, shadows carrying lanterns, beating a tom-tom and shrilling on curdling instruments.

Bennett, almost fearful without knowing why, looked round at the guests assembling. They reassured him. The electric fans were spinning above them. They were drinking cocktails. He thought he would go and dress, but then saw a man signaling to him, and recognized his nameless young friend of the morning. Beside him was a lady whose little head, in a shadow, seemed lively and detached above a rosy cloud of gauzy silk upon which fell the light of a glow-lamp. Bennett went over. Another man was at that table, but Bennett did not look at him.

"Well, you got your car all right?"

"Yes. You helped me out of that trouble nicely."

His friend laughed, and turned to the lady to explain the fun of it. "Found him on our plantation, near the Kling compound, looking for the Europe." Bennett smiled shyly, and the lady glanced at him with tired and faintly insolent eyes. "Why ever was he doing that?" she asked, indifferently, looking away across the room.

Bennett said, with an attempt at humor, that he was looking for the romance of the Orient. The lady did not appear to hear him. She began a conversation in a low tone with her companion. Bennett was about to leave, with an excuse, when he felt his arm nudged, and saw Mr. Hopkins beside him in the next chair, severe and correct in evening dress, his white beard and hair scrupulously groomed. "Hullo, Mr. Nobody!" he rumbled. "Strictly proper and comfortable here, cocktails and all. Have one." He plunged a bell, and when the Chinese apparition appeared, merely looked at it. The apparition vanished, but almost at once returned with two little glasses containing a golden liquor in which were scarlet cherries on match sticks.

"I didn't finish that story. You were in a hurry to get away, but you can't go now." Mr. Hopkins pushed over a cocktail, holding away a finger on which was a remarkable topaz. "Men who just come out, and here they are! But you can tell Poplar about the *Nellie Bligh*, when you get back. They may wonder where she went. And you can say I said so. Hopkins—there's been lots of Hopkinses, perhaps even in my family." The old fellow had an interval of private mirth. The

young man opposite, and the lady in rosy silk, were conversing in oblivious animation. "Wasn't that Chinaman just getting away with a burning rag when you ran out? I couldn't stop him. And the Dago, who was a fool, thought we had finished with the mutiny. But he soon knew better. He knew when he saw some smoke coming up by the fore hatch. Of course, Chinks are almost reasonable creatures. Almost reasonable, Mr. Nobody. We couldn't let them roast, could we? Of course not. Not if we wanted to put the fire out. Our Dago had the puzzle of his life before him. The Chinks were below us again, clamoring to be let out and pointing back at the fire. They thought they'd got the right argument that time. And that Dago was going to do it, too, and save his ship, I suppose, with hundreds of murderous maniacs round him. Not when I was there, though. Not when I had a gun. Let 'em roast. There's lots of Chinks, but only one Mr. Hopkins, and the Pelews were only three days back. I don't think, Mr. Nobody, you've ever seen anything like it. But by the time we had the boats provisioned and away all was quiet again, except for the flames. We made the Pelews. Anyhow, my boat did. I never heard what became of the other two."

The lady in rose laughed prettily. Bennett, shocked, stared at her instantly, but she was not looking at Mr. Hopkins. The other pair had a joke between them.

"Well, come along, you two. Dinner!" Mr. Hopkins rose, a tall patriarch, a venerable image of disillusioned wisdom. The young man rose, too, and moved his chair to allow the lady a path to the dining room.

He turned with a polite smile to Bennett. "Let me hear when you've found any romance in the East. But don't come looking for it on our plantation. We haven't got any there."

CHAPTER XI

One morning I escaped from the heat and the bewildering life of Singapore into a shaded office. Its windows opened south and east to a glowing panorama of ships, clouds, and islands. The long traffic of that office with the Orient had settled into a tradition of intent ease which seemed the same as cool leisure. A mounted telescope projected from an open window toward the anchorage. A man stood there with straddled legs, watching a ship coming in. He left the telescope and came to me, and talked familiarly, dabbing his forehead with a handkerchief, of America, England, China, and Japan; he spoke even of Java. But when I mentioned such places as Lombok, Flones, Flores, and Gilolo, he picked up a massive shell which was keeping a pile of papers in one place and examined it as though he hoped to divine from it what I wanted to know. The shell did not help him. Only one thing became certain: the Moluccas were as far from Singapore as that city is from New York. It was easier to get to New York. I discovered at Singapore that to talk there of Timor and Halmaheira was as profitless as asking a policeman at Charing Cross the way to the Faroes. It would be tactless and inconsiderate to embarrass the friendly fellow with such a question.

I was shown, through the office telescope, a Dutch steamer at anchor in the roads. She was bound, so I

gathered, for Java and the outer blue. She would be away for months, and she might go, according to fate and local cocoanuts, to some of the islands I had named. Why not board her and see what happened? There is much to be said, when traveling, for keeping a mind as open and doubtful as to where you are going as that of a great diplomatist when negotiating a peace treaty; and more still for not caring. I boarded that Dutchman, the *Savoe,* went into an empty cabin, and waited. Her windlass began at once to labor with the anchor, as though she had been waiting for me. The picture of distant Singapore began to revolve across my cabin port. That settled it. Now it was certain I should have to take whatever came.

There was an instant in this transition from one world to another when I was alarmed by the notion—it was on the second day out and I had just waked up—that I was the sport of a bedevilment and was being mocked. My dream of the clanging of furnace doors and of a roaring in dark tunnels changed to a Chinese boy in a bright light, who stood silently beside me with tea and a pleasing but crafty smile. Where the deuce was this? The roaring continued; the deck was being holystoned above. Beyond my cabin port-light the world was one I had never seen before.

For the first time since that fateful year when Europe developed a mania for frantic speed, aërial torpedoes, delirious bankruptcy, and stentorian broadcasting, I could feel a distinct lessening of humanity's vibrations. My own pulse showed signs of becoming normal. We were threading the Rhio and Linga islands, and the Dutch captain put his head in the cabin to inform me

that we were crossing the line. I knew it, by instinct. But which line did he mean? Anyone could guess that we were in another place. Certainly we had already crossed some line or other. You could read that in both the sea and the sky. They were greatly changed. It was surprising they tolerated our steamer at all; but perhaps we had blundered unobserved across this line. The light of that morning might have been shining undimmed since things began. There was something terrifying in its exalted and innocent splendor. Even the islands were but tinted vapors, and whether they were in the sea or in the air it was not easy to say. The isle of Banka, great as were its mountains, certainly was not in the sea. The sea was material. It was a floor of turquoise toward Banka. But that island had light beneath it. It was translated above the plain of turquoise, and I imagined that under the bulk of its hills and under the thin peninsula of miniature black trees which was prolonged from the foot of a mountain over the sea, unsupported, fragile, and miraculous, I could peer far into profound nothing. But Banka must have been land, a great island, for over it was a dense and involved region of genuine cloud, bright enough to be no more than the congealed and undiffused sunlight of ages.

Now I know quite well, for I have seen ships before and understand their purpose, that amid all that unearthly light and color my Dutch captain was going to look for copra, gums, rattans, nutmegs, mace, cloves, and cinnamon. He looked like the man to find them, too. He was small, but hard, heavy, and quick. His eyes were pale blue, but I guessed his temper was quite

another dye, and not in the least pale. He was not the sort of man to whom one might romantically suggest that those islands had nothing in them but beauty, and nothing under them but immaterial hues—not, anyhow, while there was so much evidence of wicked reefs almost alongside the empty ship which he hoped to load with copra and such, at the current rates, before he turned about.

Yet at times during a long voyage with him I was inclined to suspect that even he did not know where he was. By what could he judge? For myself, I lost count of the days in a tranquil immensity of light. We would swelter at an anchorage, taking in from an islet Heaven only knows what except mosquitoes which could bite through indiarubber. My cabin having become filled with flies like devils, and moths like jewels, the *Savoe* would leave again suddenly and for no apparent reason. But what did that matter? She was sure to find another island on any course. They were like the stars in the sky; and three huts in an otherwise abandoned raft of cocoanuts were sufficient to induce our captain to stand in and lower a boat.

Where were we then? I got out of the habit of asking that. If I were given my bearings at all it was by chance, as on the night when our chief officer, after what sounded to me like a distressing altercation with our captain (at dinner, too!), but may have been nothing but the most friendly Dutch, turned to me and began a recital. I stopped the soup and listened carefully. He was reciting in English, which made the original poem the more remarkable, Kipling's ballad of the *Mary Gloucester*. The recital ended. "An' now, Mister Tomlinsohn, you

will wonder why I do this." The Dutch seaman gazed at me earnestly, though not with greater earnestness than I gazed at him, for he had remembered every word of the poem, and more. "It is yoost because we are by the Paternosters, where he drop his wife." Could hospitality go further? Is there an English or an American literary critic, not to mention a mere sailor, who could do that? In the wide world, not one.

By such chance aids I would learn where in the world I was. There was no other way. All without warning one day our steamer, our placid and practical Dutch steamer, steered toward what I could see plainly enough was the sack and ruin of Mount Zion. We were approaching a celestial war. Battlements were tumbled and in flames, smoke rolled from those streets of jasper, and the banners of its defeated hosts were sinking to final confusion and the last night. A native ship was flying from there. Its urgent sails were spread like wings too big for its body; perhaps it was bearing away survivors. Nothing else was in sight.

We never reached that city. The *Savoe* was next at anchor in a little bay. She was encircled by the gloom of a forest which was older than Memphis. I asked no questions, but went ashore and entered that forest, wherever it was and whatever its name. Nothing was there. The trees were real, I suppose, though they gave no more sign of life than prehistoric monoliths. A slight noiseless rain and myself had the forest to ourselves. No doubt rain there was always adding to the gloom; the rain might have been only the gentle precipitation of the silence. While peering into the shadows which deepened into a hollow, some lower branches crashed

and an orang-utan swung out to look at me. (Ah yes; though I hardly believed it myself, even at the time, so you need not trouble to believe it at all.) We stared at each other for about five seconds, and then he lurched off in an explosion of breaking boughs. That settled it. I was in Borneo.

CHAPTER XII

THERE was Java. Under some mountains so distant and of so delicate a color that they were only a deeper stain of the sky were spread the flat buildings of Tanjong Priok. To my surprise, I discovered the *Savoe* had a crowd of passengers for Java. Where those Malays had been hiding themselves I forgot to ask in my surprise, for they did not in the least bear themselves like a subject race. I saw at once why the English administrators of Malaya delight in these folk—learn their language and live with them if that luck can be associated with duty, as the bibliography of the Malay Peninsula plainly shows. One group of these people was especially attractive. Its central figure was an elderly man, perhaps an *orang kaya*, or a chief of some kind, in a tartan *sarong*, a tunic, and the little white cap of one who has been to Mecca. From the way he stood he might have been the captain. His was a natural and unaffected dignity which showed that stature is of no consequence. He was a small man. His complexion was a light bronze, and his high cheek ridges and a slightly flattened nose were comely with those proud but gracious eyes set apart in wide intelligence. His women were with him, some attendants, and a school of children. They spread themselves across the upper deck like a rainbow, for the bright scarf over the head of each woman was a different wonder. One girl I thought was an elder daughter. She

seemed on easy terms with her father. Her scarf was blue silk in which gilt crescents were sprinkled. The numerous buttons of her jacket were English sovereigns. Her feet and arms were bare, except for silver bangles, and her pose would have attracted the attention of any lady in musical comedy who was supposed to learn that the tradition of a duchess is different. As with one hand she held a younger child, whose head in a yellow silk scarf peeped out nervously and wonderingly from behind her, this Malay girl would touch her father; I think she must have been amusing him with jokes about the dominant white race that was so active about them.

Her sly but constant smiles were bright with an array of gold-plated teeth. But only once or twice did her father answer her with a faintly ironic grimace, as he listened to her and watched the busy officials who had boarded us. The Malays, one hears, do not work, if they can avoid it. They leave work to the whites and Chinese. Yet on that moral problem I suspect the old *orang kaya* would have had an entertaining word or two. Life to him would be subtle and varied, and he would be a little apart from it, and he would have a rich variety of names for its finer shades.

I regretted I could not seek his opinion about Java, a land that was a serious disappointment to me some time before I reached it. The gorgeous East obviously could not be, and ought not to be, so gorgeous as Java's holiday posters, which are in the style of the loudest Swiss art. "Come to Java!" Well, perhaps not. Not while the East Indies are so spacious and have so many other islands; not if Java is like its posters. Why should the East call itself mysterious when it advertises itself with

the particularity of a Special Motor Supplement? I felt I ought to keep away from Java. I thought I would prefer to leave it to those who enjoy traveling round the earth in eighty days, and who see all the wonders of it from the deck of a twin-screw composite restaurant and tennis court. The fact that some important people feel, even while at sea, the mind growing slack when withdrawn from the resources of the bridge table and the golf course, is probably at the bottom of the world's more violent forms of Bolshevism. But Java stood in the way of my coasting steamer, which had to call at every port, and at some places which are not ports but merely wish they were, along the north coast of it. This hindrance had to be endured for the privilege of seeing the outer islands, those unimportant beaches which will have no posters of their own, for which we should thank God and fevers, for some time to come.

Our first Javan port, Tanjong Priok, is the harbor for Batavia. And here the mosquitoes came aboard in hosts so ravenous that they tried to bite their way into the cabins, and so stuck to the new paint. I abandoned the ship. Java may be a perfectly healthy island, and malaria there—as one is led to infer—as rare and inconsequential as falling upstairs; but the ship's new paint scared me. It broke down my resolution not to see Java, and I fled ashore. Even the hotels which sell picture post cards, and offer the Javanese equivalents of the art products one pays for at Zurich and leaves behind, might prove a shade better than such mosquitoes.

There is a railway from Tanjong Priok to Batavia. Black monkeys dwell one side of the line, and gray on the other. The black monkeys never leave their palms

to cross the metals to mix with the grays in the opposite palms. The grays observe carefully the same etiquette. The guide book has no doubt about this, and some one on the ship is bound to give you the same advice with such particularity that its truth cannot be questioned by the polite. By the time you have persuaded the customs officer that you have no explosives in your luggage, that your face and its photograph in the passport really do approximate, and have got the man from the hotel at Weltevreden to understand that you intend to go up by train and not in an automobile already wrecked, the monkeys are forgotten. Yet not by everybody. My train had not gone far when a Dutch traveler drew my attention again to the curiosity. "You see? There are black monkeys on that side. Here are gray. They do not meet. No. They do not cross the railway, not each of them. Yes." I was going to ask him whether they would forfeit the government subsidy if they broke the contract and spoiled the story; but the Dutchman looked so kindly, and so plainly wished to save a foreigner from boredom, that the question would have been a rank crime. I nodded, and looked first at the black tribe, and then at the gray, to show him that his good nature was not wasted on me.

The hotels in the Dutch East Indies, in spite of an occasional Russian String Quartette which plays hotel music at dinner if the lights do not fail, cannot help letting you know that home is very distant. They can do this without the aid of the banyan trees, the natives in their bright sarongs and jackets, and the dead weight of the heat. Your bedroom is isolated from the central public rooms by shrubberies. You live there literally

a cloistered life with lizards and flies. The notions entertained by Malays of time and space are purely relative and are easily disarranged; and so even when you ring for a servant you may still remain lonely, with the lizards, and your finger firm but hopeless on the electric button. You may watch the hawks poised in the upper blue, or the fight between a hunting spider and a mantis in a corner of the veranda. Nothing else is likely to happen. And it is hard to tell one Malay servant from another, where they all recline on flagstones in the shade, listening in beautiful patience to the appealing bells and watching the grasshoppers. When not asleep Malays will observe nature for hours without moving. But it would be wrong, for it would increase the weight of the heat, to get angry with them. They are but children living in eternity; and how can time be wasted by those who possess all of it?

Yet though one's annoyance quickly evaporates, the tropical sweat which it has caused does not. It is then that the happy nature of the Eastern bath may be learned. At first that dank recess behind the bedroom, where there is nothing but some toads, an earthenware cistern, and a brass dipper, is puzzling, as well as repellent. How does one manage it? Newcomers have been known to climb into the earthenware tub, and at once upset themselves, with the water, on the flags. That is not the way to do it. While the toads sit up to watch, you spill waterfalls over your body from the dipper. The water is tepid, but occasionally it is almost possible to believe that it has shocked you a little way toward an active existence. And after this pretense in Batavia, what is there to do? A man might be thought eccentric

if he stood watching the Javanese ladies up to their waists in yellow canal ooze, washing the household linen while gossiping with the bronze figures of men who are posed near them on bamboo rafts. Yet they make a picture which is worth attention, for it is heartening to learn that the human form may be as good as that. There is, too, the Portuguese cannon, an antiquity from the days of the early navigators, which these ladies keep polished through sitting upon it when prayerfully desiring a child; but its interest is soon exhausted. They never sit there while being watched. For that reason, and to make the shy practice of this ancient religious rite as obscure as possible, the gun is secreted near some unlikely sheds, with a screen of plaited rushes round it. It is framed with paper flowers, and it has a little altar for the burning of incense at its butt. Strange, that faith in a phallic shape should still be able to overcome all the superior prejudices acquired from Brahma, Buddha, Mecca, and even from Jerusalem! For it is said that European ladies know where to find this instrument of generative magic, and to trust its power; which, if true, is much more astonishing in our cautious days of limited families than even the survival of a simple faith all the way from the dateless silence in which sleeps Palæolithic man.

There is the observance of another rite in the Dutch East Indies that is less worthy of respect but is no less remarkable; and watch it you must. It is called the Rice Table. It is impossible to practice this rite in secret. It takes more room than an old cannon; and the simple faith which holds to its ultimate beneficence before all the derisive unbelievers in a public dining

room must be as strong as death and nearly as fatal. I never got quite hardened enough to sit at dinner unperturbed beside another man while he steadily overcame a Rice Table. Before he had more than half vanquished his array of dishes I felt it better to creep silently away, leaving my own dinner unfinished; for who could tell what divine wrath might not be loosed in a time of food shortage if a human creature were detected buried up to the neck in boiled rice and spiced comestibles, and still was burrowing into it deeper with every mouthful? Heaven may be tried too much, and a Rice Table is the kind of dinner which might cause astonishment at the distance of the Milky Way. It is not a meal, but a buffalo wallow. I said buried up to the neck. I should not like to do violence to a figure of speech. I must insist on the neck—the nape of it; that is all of a man's features which are exposed when he is bowed in the act of eating his Rice Table. It is proper when relating the incidents of travel to be strictly accurate.

The first time I witnessed a man performing at this meal his campaign was well forward before I noticed anything was strange, because it happened that, at the time, my knowledge of Malay was being firmly disputed by a Malay waiter. I got at length within a few degrees of my own course, and then saw that the man opposite, before whom was a high mound of boiled rice, was not attended by one servant, but by a long queue of servants, and that each was bearing a salver, and that each was waiting for the moment when he could take another step forward in the congested procession. They moved up to the diner, shuffle by shuffle. As far as

he could—and that Dutchman was as deft and business-like as a letter-sorter on St. Valentine's day—he selected portions of food from the long vista of salvers and placed them with his rice. It would be mere vanity to pretend that my knowledge of natural history is wide enough to unravel everything the hotel kitchen had mystified for that Dutchman, but fish was just recognizable, and chicken, eggs, nuts, prawns, seaweed, and bamboo shoots. All these, and more, either went direct into the mound of rice, or were deposited in satellitic vesicles arranged in orbits round the solar plate. Then the diner pulled his mustache upward, adjusted his spectacles, and briskly mixed the central mound into a discolored muck, frowning shrewdly as he did it, while the Malays looked on with faces subdued to resignation. Before it was possible to wonder what he intended to do with it all his face plunged and the back of his neck stared entranced at the ceiling. I don't know when he came up. My own escape into the hot night was before that.

A fitful display of ruby and emerald light, in which the shapes of palm trees wavered, attracted me outside, for it was faintly reminiscent of the bright illustrations to youth's nicely expurgated edition of the *Thousand and One Nights*. It proved to be only a cinematograph show. In the open air, while limelight changed the surrounding foliage into a fantasy, and noiseless bats as big as ravens made the shadows startling, a mild Javanese crowd sat watching the history of "Faithless Wives," and other pleasing pictorial narratives of Anglo-Saxon fraud, infidelity, treachery, silliness, and robbery under arms, with comic interludes as

unmistakenly funny as the brick which hits the policeman on the head. What the Orientals thought of us, while getting privy knowledge at long last of white society on its usual behavior from these frank confessions by our leading cinema artists, they did not disclose. They silently drifted home to their bamboo shelters. But if the magic lantern with such vital and unquestioned revelation of our curious conduct when we are comfortably at home does not accomplish more than all the propaganda of Moscow in encouraging the Orient to suppose that white folk ought to be treated with contempt, then there is nothing in common sense. There is a pallid rumor—it can be as pallid as a nervous child who has dreamed of a ghost—of a rising of the East against the West. If there is anything behind it, then blame the cinematograph. Our best representative artists are showing the East that its revolt would be merely a duty owed to decency, a sort of righteous war to end inanity.

CHAPTER XIII

THE trains of Java move only by day. The island is of great length, and in some areas its surface is subject without warning to dissolution by flood or earthquake. I was uncertain whether I ought to return to the ship and face the mosquitoes, or risk the failure of a locomotive to coincide with my ship at the other end of the land. When in doubt, the risk should be put into the future. The longer the shot, the more likely Fate may miss us. For a time, however, after I boarded a train at Batavia, this indolent reasoning seemed to have a catch in it. Java appeared to be of slight interest in the initial stage of the journey; and of the four or more languages which are common in the island I had but a faint knowledge of one, and even that amount of knowledge was denied me by those who spoke it. As for the Dutch tongue, the animated conversations of my fellow passengers exiled me as far as a foreigner ever feels his distance from home. Yet how many of our experiences are desolating simply because of our way of looking at them? I remember one day when my Javan train was stopped in a jungle. Floods had washed away lengths of the track ahead of us. That day began to fall toward the quick sunset of the tropics, but the train remained as still as the giant leaves which hung over us. Scarlet dragonflies were hawking about a pool below my window, and above the pool, high in a tangle of

leaves, an ape, who appeared to suppose he was securely ambushed, eyed us in imbecile curiosity. Were we to be buried all night there? I could not learn. I tried to find out, but, though possibly my acquaintance with Malay could lead to a railway accident, it will never be able to discuss it.

Then the rain began again with a steady force which made me fear for other sections of that line, and for the coincidence of a future train with my ship. The other end of the island was very far. But I had only enough words to secure coffee and food. I could learn nothing. An elderly and severe Dutch lady was sitting near me. She had been reading closely a large volume —probably of affairs concerning the Seventh Day Adventists—since the morning, with hardly a lift of her face. The long halt, the continued rain, the gloomy forest in which we stood without hope, the night we should probably spend in it, were nothing to her. She read on, as though she had secured for her own eye alone a veritable judgment or two from the yet unpublished Decrees of Doom. Compared with her countenance, that unknown forest darkening to absolute night in the rain was a May-time pleasaunce. Anyhow, I could easily presume that she had no more ability to communicate with me than with a Hottentot. A native brought me food, was paid, and went away. The lady then put down her book, frowned at me over the top of her glasses, and remarked with slow distinction: "You have paid far too much for that. Let me see your change." (Mechanically and meekly I displayed some insignificant coins.) "So. Far too much you have

paid. It is not useful. It also makes it very bad for other travelers."

My embarrassed eyes fell before the direct attack of her steel spectacles, and I glanced apologetically at her book. It was the *Swiss Family Robinson*, in a primitive English edition which resembled a veritable fragment of a London home I have not seen since I was a child, and shall never see again.

It is as easy as cheating the innocence of a wondering babe to get credence at home for tales of travel when they are of tigers, men with tails, cannibal dwarfs, head-hunters, islands where the women are so lovely that it would be wicked to give the latitude and longitude, and South Sea adventures more sensational than could be devised by a select committee of desperate theatrical managers. But who would accept stories of surprises by the plain truth? Yet it is fair to claim that even the Robinson family on its obliging island never had a more incredible adventure than my own with the Dutch lady in the equatorial forest.

I left Batavia for Sourabaya without regret, but with no hope, except that my ship would be at Sourabaya to take me away. The orchestras which played negro music to Dutchmen eating messes of rice, the cinema drama which made one ashamed of belonging to a better race, the advertisement posters that might have been continuations of the hoardings of Ostend, had shattered another dream. I settled down to regard its bright fragments in patience and resignation. Yet too soon! For there may be more delightful islands in the world than Java, but the evidence for them will have to be very well assembled. The likeness of some scenes in

Java to the colored pictures of the Garden of Eden in an illustrated Bible of Victorian days is ridiculous. You suspect, as I did the monkeys beside the Tanjong Priok railway, that those fair prospects are artfully arranged by a clever government for the delectation of the credulous. But there are too many of them. They continue uninterrupted in fortuitous variety. Not far from Batavia a high serration of mountains appeared in the distance, so very blue in that bright day that it was easy to believe a scene-shifter was at work upon the background for the staging of a lavish tropical romance. Soon we began to wind among the heights and to cross dramatic ravines. Very cleverly done it was, too. I liked that brown child dressed only in a hat as big as a parasol, who sat on the back of a buffalo, resting one elbow on his living couch while watching our train go by. That was a cunning touch. Just beyond him was a group of amber houses, of bamboo thatched with palm fronds. They were, as you have guessed, screened by the green pennants of plantains, and were shadowed by cocoanut palms; and—as they would, of course, in such a composition—they stood on the brow of a hill which descended in steps of radiant emerald, in terraces of young rice, to a plain so far below us that the river there was only a silver wire threading checker-work too distinct and vivid to be anything but the masterpiece of an imaginative decorator. Beyond that plain one saw then the full artful value of the blue crags of the volcanic range with which the picture began.

The orchards of Kent and California are not more assiduously cultivated than is most of the island of Java. The Javanese agriculturalists, ever since they had

a civilized government—and that was early in the Christian era—have had to make their fields meet the extortions of so many conquerors before they dared to call any rice their own that now they deserve the glowing testimonial of all directors of empire and great business affairs. Their training has been long and thorough. Hindu, Mohammedan, and European each has taught them the full penalty for Adam's fall; and so the habit of very early rising, and of a long day in the sun, with but a meager expectation of any reward, give them the right aspect of sound and reliable workers. You cannot rise at an hour in the interior of Java, unless you never sleep, which will get you on the road sooner than the country folk going to market. My first shock with a motor-car in the mountains of central Java came through just avoiding, long before dawn, a man carrying several thirty-foot bamboo poles. It was so early that I thought he must be an Oriental student of William Cobbet, or a corresponding member of one of the American colleges which make one better than one's fellow at a nominal charge. In keeping his poles out of the wind screen we nearly ran down some silent children, discovered instantly by the headlight, who were carrying trays of fruit. This made us careful; but only just in time, for we had then to move cautiously in a road full of the sudden ghosts of dumb folk who were getting about the business of the day which had not yet called them. I never saw people of the Malay race in any other island who were nearly so finely trained as the Javanese land workers. There could not have been a better demonstration of the value of learning one's place in life early—say not less than ten gen-

erations back. With plenty of time and few interruptions it is clearly possible for a superior caste to evolve a race of skilled workers who will do everything and yet expect nothing. These people have terraced the hillslopes of Java with padi fields till the gradient is past human skill. Vast landscapes that once were dark with jungle are now spectacular gardens. The decorative terraces, the *sawahs*, bearing growing crops, have caught the hills in what appears to be a bright and infinite mesh. Nothing can be lost on those hills now, nothing of their immense fertility, not a drop of rain. Elaborate irrigation works deflect and address myriads of natural rills to fill with water the hollow steps of the slopes, which shine with rice. The rills grow from threads to docile streams, descending disciplined courses from high altitudes to the main rivers in the plains. Humanity has nothing to learn from the ant. Its patient industry must astonish the angels.

Through such scenery my train meandered all one day, as though consciously it intended to make me apologize to Java. There was fun to be got even in guessing from the color or form of the distant crops their nature —rice that was just planted, was a month old, was just grown, was in the ear, was sere stubble; and yams, cassava, tea, coffee, rubber, teak, sugar, tobacco, pulse. The country folk themselves, conscious of their ornate setting, were dressed for the part. A group of these women, moving in a musical comedy, would give a manager complete assurance in the matter of his box-office receipts. They are so modest and polite that they never stare at a stranger; though with such figures, eyes, and coloring, I doubt whether he would object greatly

if they did. Their manners are perfect, except that most of them chew betel nut and casually make railway platforms and footpaths startling with red maculations. It is distressing to see a beautiful woman laugh, when her opened mouth looks as though a savage blow had just wounded it.

The railroads of Java are a novelty in inconsequential idling, and they have so many surprises that are not in the schedules and the guide books that I became the less anxious about my ship—there are other ships—and forgave the posters of Batavia. Javanese trains should not be hurried. That would spoil their sauntering. I began to regret there were other islands of Indonesia to which I was bound. In the midst of huts and foliage which pretended to be real the train would come to a standstill. What was the name of this village which no one applauded? The old sport of hunting for the name of a strange railway station acquired a new zest; but as a rule I could find only the Malay word for a famous soap. To add to my bewilderment everybody there was looking at my train, which clearly was the real event. We had an audience of people so decorative that they must have been attired in our honor. A diminutive brown lady in a yellow wrapper, with elaborate combs in her hair, held up to my window a tray with fruit, cholocate, and less well authenticated sweetmeats, and a small selection of the novels of Miss Dell; and by her dawdling smile I judged that she had sold Miss Dell's romances to Englishmen before ever my train was there.

CHAPTER XIV

THE moist heat of Java's plains and seaports, even when the interest of a place is just a little more remarkable than the temperature, soon turns one to thoughts of escape, in the bare hope that Java somewhere in its garden has a bower which has not the peculiar virtue of a vapor bath. "Why, if you go to Garut," I was told in a voice which suggested a wonder that I was not required to believe without Thomas's proof, "you will want a blanket at night!"

I had never heard of Garut, but one place is as good as another to a traveler who is rewarded by whatever he can get. I found Garut in the mountains of central Java, somewhere behind Tjilatjap. There was no trouble in finding it. Everybody seemed to know it. But I shall remember Garut as I remember Sfax, Taormina, Chartres, Tlemçen, and other odd corners of the earth, some without even a name on the map, where we arrived by chance and disconsolate, and from which we departed with something in our memory, forgotten till then, that had been lighted briefly by what may have been a ray of moonshine. Can such an experience be communicated? But how shall a man define his faith?

Yet there Garut is—or there it was, for I am not going to assert the existence of any spot on earth that was, for all I know, revealed to me briefly by lunar

means—there Garut is for me at least, high on a ridge above a confusion of tracks through rice and tobacco plantations. The bearings of the place as I saw it can be only vague, and are probably wrong. The women of its *campongs* cast down their eyes as you approach, the children run into their huts, and the men raise their big hats of grass politely. It is secluded within ranges of dark peaks, but its own fields are bright and have the warm smell of new earth. From a grove of bamboos which fringes the highest ledge of a vast amphitheater terraced with steps of rice you look out into space and down to an inclosed plain. The plain is remote enough to be the ceremonious setting for the drama of a greater race of beings; men would be insignificant there. But the stage is empty; only the cicadas and frogs fill that immense arena with their songs just before the day goes. The ridge of the opposite side of the theater dissolves in rainstorms and is reformed momentarily by lightning.

The night was cold. I had to get up to find that blanket. It was still colder before dawn, when a knocking at my door warned me that I had arranged to go to a village called Jiporai, where it was said I could find a horse and so could ride to some mysterious height where there were hot springs in a forest. That folly was of my doing—it came of my easy compliance to a foolish suggestion made when my mood, induced by Garut and wine, was inclusive and grateful. Nor would it be any use, I found, to ignore that knocking. The native outside was going to keep it up. In the bleak small hours my need for a horse had vanished. I did not feel it. I did not want a horse.

Yet there it was; and out of the village of Jiporai the track mounted quickly, while from the saddle of a stout pony—he was as petulant as myself over this preposterously early excursion—I looked at the darkness which filled the amphitheater of mountains; it was a starless lake of night. We were only just above the level of that expanse of chilling shadow, and its depth, straight down from where the pony's feet clattered the stones on the edge of it, was unseen and unknown. But I stopped him when the sun came. He turned his head, too, with his ears cocked eastward. We both watched. The great space below us quickly filled with light. We could see to the bottom of it. Without a movement, rider and horse were at once placed by the dawn at a dizzy height, on an aërial path.

The pony snorted and shook his head. It was morning, it was warm, and suddenly the earth began to exhale odors. We went through a flimsy *campong*, with relics of totems over its huts, and shy women with babies straddled on their hips pretended they could not see us. The men were in the padi fields beyond. We came upon some of these workers making coffee and cooking rice under a thatch propped on four poles. They accepted us as though they had always known us, and I may have had a better breakfast than that at some time or other, but I don't remember it.

We had to pass through a deep ravine remarkable with the fronds of immense ferns arched from its rocks. There was an outlook at times over steep places, where distant lower Java was framed in immediate tree-ferns, grotesque leaves, and orchids. We passed up to a grassy plateau, which might have been an English ducal

park. The flowers there were of another climate—raspberry, brambles, the yellow heads of composite plants, and labiate herbs. In a hollow of a forest beyond there were forbidding and incrusted recesses where the foliage was veiled in bursts of steam. But we did not pause by those caldrons of boiling mud. The smell of sulphur is not good. Those pools were not designed for the rustic wonder of travelers, nor even to admonish them of what follows after sin. I do not know for what they were designed, but a few years ago, so I was told, they boiled over and obliterated forty of the villages where the people are so good-natured.

So we learn that the rich and beautiful island of Java is not, after all, a creation especially intended to support the flamboyant posters of Batavia. Sometimes it does things on its own account. It was even with a degree of pleasure, later, that I learned I should not be allowed to leave Sourabaya without a visit to the port's medical officer. It broke the spell of the Garden of Eden to find that that corner of it is infected by the plague, and that anyone emerging from the garden is suspect of subtle evil. But what attraction would there be in a snakeless Paradise?

CHAPTER XV

When a scholarly English traveler I met at Batavia found in me no warm regard for the ancient Buddhist tope at Borobudor, and only a loose wish to see it before I died, he adjusted his monocle to get me into a sharper focus. I tried to meet his sudden critical interest with an aspect hastily mustered of original intelligence, but I could see my reputation had perished. He was disappointed. An unfortunate sign now showed in me that he had hitherto overlooked. I should have to make a fight for this, or it would end in my seeing the famous curiosity.

The archæologist was severe, and spoke slowly, like one who knows the truth. "Remember, you have come many thousands of miles. It is probably the only chance in your life to see one of the most remarkable temples in the world."

"But I don't want to distort my brief span by trying to cram every experience into it. I know I can be happy without Borobudor."

"Eh? Pardon me. But this relic is unique."

"So am I, sir; so are you. We are even older than that old tope by about seven hundred years. Besides, I have seen its portraits, and they fill me with despair."

His monocle dropped from his raised eyebrow. "Despair? It's a wonderful mass. It's an amazing pile. I do not understand so incurious a man. You astonish

me. Everybody sees it who comes to Java. Despair? Why, dammit, think of the industry, think of the devotion of those people who converted the rocks of a hilltop into a huge temple!"

"I have thought of it. That's what disheartens me. It is horrible. Those stones with their carvings commemorate calm and settled error . . ."

The archæologist held up his right hand and waved it gently in the way a policeman stops the traffic. I stopped.

"Excuse me. If they erred, what is that to us? It is their art which matters, not its cause. And even its cause—such devotion to their faith, carried to its topmost pinnacle, crowning a hill with the proof of man's yearning mind, deserves more than your flippant indifference. Borobudor was a temple to God."

"That's the trouble with it. That's the nearest to God we ever get. If I went, I know I should only have it rubbed in that we seem unable to receive a simple lesson in wisdom without at once beginning to elaborate it into a system to justify what we want to do. Why, if Buddha were to come to Java, Borobudor is probably the one place he would be careful to avoid!"

"Sir, you have no reverence for your fellows. Those sincere stones celebrate faith."

"What of that? Have you ever had to jump for it when faith dropped one of its sincere bombs? Those fervid stones embarrass me like fetiches and patriotic songs."

"I've never heard anything like it. You can't mean what you say. I won't listen to you. Here is man struggling upward through the ages, and he reaches

something so wonderful as Borobudor, and you talk as though it were a symptom of a disease. Monstrous! Why ever do you travel, sir?"

"I don't know, but I prefer to enjoy it, if I can."

"But how can you enjoy it if you miss the most important things in travel? What do you learn?"

"The confirmation of my prejudices, I suppose. What else could I learn?"

"Ah, the war has destroyed respect and worship in you younger men. You want to begin everything again, but you cannot, you cannot. Borobudor is there, and it is too strong for you. You think you can forget it, but it won't let you."

"Why was that temple ever dug out of the jungle to which it belonged? A fixed tangle of dark and incurable thoughts!"

"I cannot discuss this with you, sir. There is nothing else like Borobudor in the world."

"This poor world is overloaded with Borobudors. We struggle beneath them, yet nothing will satisfy you but you must dig out another from the forest which had fortunately hidden it. There it is, to distress any wretched traveler who passes it with the idea that man will never escape from himself. Borobudor is a nightmare."

Shortly after this interview I was on my way to the ruins. It was not by intention. My affairs drifted that way, somehow, perhaps because the roads of the world are clandestine with their memory of the past, and so we move in the old direction of humanity without ever knowing why. The archæologist was right. The Borobudors are too strong for us. There is no escape.

But we entered a region of Java where it was raining —where it had rained, apparently, for a period approaching forty days. Gray clouds were close to us. If we saw a mountain it had the appearance of the severe personification of the Creator at the Flood presiding over the drowning of the earth. The hurrying rivers were alarming. Their yellow floods were above the lower branches of the forests. The toy hamlets, which had looked so delightful in the sun, stood in shadow and inundation, with the water up to the veranda ladders, and from their perches on those ladders the dejected natives watched the rain still falling. Then the railway track dissolved ahead of us and we had to wait till another was made. So we were very late in reaching Jokyacarta, and it began to appear as though the rain would wash away the Buddhist temple, so far as I was concerned. Jokyacarta is an old native capital of Java, and the place where the last rebellion of the island broke out against the Dutch, in 1825. It must have been a good rebellion. It lasted for five years. Though I was not anxious to see historic relics, I was at least curious to see the Javanese in an ancient center of their culture, because their mild and docile demeanor elsewhere no more suggested rebellion than do the timid orphans of a charity school.

In the hotel at night I argued myself into a corner. What about visiting this temple, and doing what all travelers do? At length I surrendered. It was clear I could not dispute with everybody who asked me what I thought of Borobudor—for it would come to that; it would be assumed that I had seen it and was awed—

so I ordered a conveyance for the morning. The temple was thirty miles distant. I had better get it over.

In the morning, before my very door, the folk of Jokyacarta were going to market. They were gossiping, and looking this way and that, as casual as though all days were holidays and obsessions of the human mind had never been perpetuated in monumental stone and enduring empires. Nothing was dark in that throng. It was as varied as a garden and as engaging as birds on a June morning. I joined it. It is pleasant to go to market, for markets are places where people live and where even small change is more important than lost and awful fortunes. A motor-car stood at my door and its driver salaamed, but I gave him good morning and passed on.

Jokyacarta, even to my inexperienced eye, was an important city, for its people seemed unaware of the urgency of the outer world. They were going their own way. The walls of the Sultan's palace, about which even the great trees are trimmed and subdued to the shape of the Royal Umbrella, the Javanese sign of right and might, are said to inclose the ten thousand people of his court. It was easy to believe it of such walls, for they were prolonged beyond the extent of a merely ordinary interest in walls, beyond a modern indifference to the prerogatives of divine right, and beyond a simple wayfarer's knowledge of the requirements of a thousand wives and concubines. Such walls will arise, of course, out of an intricate compost of Brahma, Buddha, and Mohammed, when the many laboring rice-growers of a country are industrious, tolerant, and credulous. Something like it can be done almost anywhere. Other

nations have made an ornate muddle not so vastly inferior out of the worship of the steam engine and the cotton jenny. Those portentous gates and buildings, and whispers of an elaborate royal ritual within so overwhelming and anciently traditional as to appear insane to an uninstructed stranger, were confidently supposed to be inducements to me to enter. Yet, no. I could see no hope there; and I was traveling on the bare chance of finding plain daylight. I did hear that in all affairs of state in Jokyacarta to-day a Dutchman sits potent but unobtrusive, and that thus the impressive display of divine right is almost sterilized of its divinity; yet for all I could hear, that Dutchman might represent only another kind of righteous power, and, as compulsion of any kind will almost certainly rouse resistance in my wicked heart and I did not want to excite evil on a pleasant day, I turned aside.

How faithful and bounteous a spring of original life —common humanity everywhere! It is like rain and grass and the sun. To read the history of Java from the Hindu to the Dutch would lead a distant student to imagine that its people must have had every spark and airy bubble compressed out by the strong governments of fifteen centuries, and that there is left but a flat and doleful residue of homogeneous obedience. But some joy will remain after the strongest governance has done its best. That market place, though at least as old as sultanic prejudice in concubines, and vastly more ancient than the Prophet's victories in Java, might only that morning have come into bloom. Its leisurely throng had forgotten that the military roads of their island garden are built of their bones. They have risen again.

You may look for their conquerors in the old library of the museum at Batavia, if you so much as remember their names; but the unimportant victims of great triumphs, secure with a secret which is hidden from mogulship no matter what its cavalry and batteries, looked as though they, after all, were the favorites of the sun. I don't know what the positive evidence for immortality may be. I have never seen it. I don't know how it can be proved that we are the sons and daughters of God. But when I remember the sergeant who called to his men toiling through the mud and wire where the shells were falling, "Come on, you! Do you want to live forever?" and when I recall, as I must when most fearful for the meek at heart, the smiling forbearance of another man when he looked at the error and hate that were to extinguish his good will, then I think there must be a light that can never go out.

That was an assurance worth going to market to get. It was procurable at any stall in Jokyacarta. What you bought was wrapped up in it. It was certain these people could do very well without the aid of sultans, priests, or governors, whose assistance, somehow, they had survived, so far. What promise of Java's development could be better than the figures and poise of those girls who were selling their *batik* to a Chinaman? They were there when the Hindus came, they had survived every conquest, and there they were still, with eternity in which to have their own way if Chinamen were obdurate. Their gestures and pose proved them to be of an ancient and noble line. The great dove-colored bull beside them, his nose and ears of black velvet and his eyes tranquil with drowsy pride, had come with them all the way from

the past. That market place, with its craftsmen and women, could light the fire of humanity again on the abandoned hearths of a bare continent.

I was already settled with this comfortable thought in the train for Sourabaya next day when an official from my hotel, whose anxious face was peering into every coach, presently found me. There had been a mistake. I had not paid for my motor-car to Borobudor. It had waited for me all day. Borobudor?

CHAPTER XVI

July 1.—The hotel omnibus which met me at Sourabaya station last night was like a processional car. The horse's harness was covered with bells, and I jingled off like an Oriental bride. When I woke this morning and moved, a lizard flicked from sight behind a wall mirror. It was just as though the wall had cracked in a ghostly way. There was no crack when I looked again. On the floor an army of ants was doing to death a large caterpillar. The giant heaved and threw the mites, but he was doomed. The unhurried resolution and certitude of his enemies shocked me. I felt like God on his dais watching a victory, and was half inclined to abolish the lot—drop a boot on the tragic drama like a comet. It was so obtuse and loutish an affair. But what could I do? My comet would only have worsened the distressing mess. I was glad I was not God; I felt no responsibility. A hot day; and the streets of Sourabaya sprawl into infinity. As usual, the most interesting quarter of this East Indian city is the Chinese. The shops of the narrow streets by the canal, and the canal, the Kali Maas, with its gaudy sampans, are pleasing with curious stratagems and devices. I might have bought one porcelain bowl, of a blue which conquered me, but a gramophone in that shop was revolving Flowery Land music, and I was hypnotized. The bowl was remembered again only when I had wandered off. It

was too hot to go back. Besides, the bowl was probably fraudulent. I met a Mohammedan funeral. Behind it was an Arab on a bicycle. He wore a red fez, white linen jacket, zebraic shirt and tie, cerise pantaloons, brown boots, and his purple socks were racked taut with suspenders. I found a big store with many English books. Yet I noticed the usual distinction made there between Dutch and English travelers. The Dutch, in translation, get the best of everything of ours. There, amid the coffee berries, rice, tennis shoes, tinned tripe, and white shirts, was a great assortment of our literature; but it was unapproachable in its Dutch guise. For me there was only tinned tripe. I will not mention titles and names, but I went through hundreds of books in English, hoping for the best, with the ready guilders in my willing hand. A bald-headed man might as well have searched the rows of bottles and pots in a hairdresser's shop devoted to the ladies. But it was possible in that shop for a connoisseur to find exactly what he wanted in a display of the choicest brands of English tennis racquets.

July 2.—There was something odd in the look of my Dutch steamer this morning when I boarded her off Sourabaya. I had not noticed it before. It was not her suggestion of indolence. Even a liner which carries important people and the mails on long voyages to the great ports of the world may appear to one who visits her as if she were thoroughly tired after her exertions, and did not intend to move for a long time. It was not the *Savoe's* languor which was remarkable. One might expect lassitude in a torrid roadstead of Java. But her design suggests that she expects no

weather but halcyon; yet her boats are broad and shallow scows, with diagonal strakes for greater strength, and are fended all around the gunwales by stout rope. If the mother ship does not expect to meet even a gale, it is certain her boats are meant for handy work on seas which in shallow waters will break into a dangerous surf. Their davits and falls are clearly designed to get the boats out and away quickly and often; and that is certainly very unusual in the boats of a steamship.

Her sailors are working—if closely watched one could almost swear they are working—at tasks which do not appear to be relevant. Their cotton trousers have attractive floral patterns, and their neat muslin bodices are very ladylike. Their millinery, as another sparkling Parisian outrage in Oxford Street, would have all the attraction of originality. They are Malays, of Java and Celebes. The *Savoe* is bound for more beaches than I have counted, and she may deviate and add as many more as pleases the captain. They are scattered between the Java Sea and New Guinea, and some of them are places which are not named on the common maps. For that reason I had supposed I should be the only passenger. I was wrong. Some *prahus* approached us. Each had two triangular sails, set upside down to my eyes, for the base of the triangle was uppermost. These open boats flew with great wings, and their narrow bodies rocked in a startling way; the men who handled them had little to learn. In fact, the chief officer told me they were Madurese and the grandsons of pirates. They flew alongside with our passengers. The first out was a perambulator. A Bugis

woman followed with her child. No athlete could board a lively motor-bus with more grace than that Malay mother launched from her prancing craft to our gangway. She was followed by a tangle of humanity, Malays, Arabs, and Chinese, in costumes as noticeable as those of the actors in an inexplicable allegory. Among them was a lady who was neither Bugis nor Dutch, but something of each, who wore what might have been bed drapery with a design of pomegranates and parrots, a turban, and a black gauze mantelet. There was also an Englishman with a monocle. There was a Hadji in his white cap, wearing gold-rimmed spectacles, a maroon sarong or skirt, and a khaki tunic.

We sailed; and the background for just such an extravagant and willful romance as would accord with our company has been provided all day by the mountainous coast of East Java, the sun, and the clouds. There was plaintive music from the queer soliloquizing instruments enjoyed by our native passengers, who are berthed on a lower deck, which has open sides, and was light and even fresh till the passengers had occupied it for a few hours. By then banana skins and the chewing of betel nut made that deck a horror to our chief mate, who, being Dutch, is a sailor with a noticeable strain of the housewife. But Malays are used to floors of earth, or else to floors of bamboo with the earth a few feet below. Decks to them are to recline upon and to spit upon.

I am bound to confess that the perambulator, and the swarm of brown children whose voices reach my cabin on the boat deck, are contrary to my idea of what is

right in a voyage in strange seas. What have perambulators to do with the Flores Sea and the Macassar Strait? What has a bicycle—for a bicycle swings from an awning beam over a Chinese peddler, who sprawls on a mat on the after hatch—what business has a bicycle with pearl fishing or with *manuk dewata,* the "bird of the gods"?

There is something else, too. There is the incessant and valiant crowing of many cocks. But when I reproached the mate because my voyage was being made between a nursery and a farmyard he said: "But you do not know. We are in a world by itself. You shall see." And to begin with a trifle I discovered that the poultry is all game-cocks, and that matches might be arranged on the ship—but would not be allowed by the captain—at any time. For the Dutch, having put down head-hunting among most of the islands, and piracy altogether, considered it wise to leave some outlets to the pugnacity of the islanders, and to their passion for gambling. Piracy, of course, was merely gambling by speculators of temerity, skill, and enterprise; and it was only the armed steam launch that eradicated it from the complex reefs and shallows of these difficult seas; and that means, of course, that it was ended but last week. Something, then, had to be allowed to these leisured but mettlesome men, and so cock-fighting and gambling were left for their indulgence, as compensations for the loss of the more desperate pastimes.

There was something even worse than the perambulators and the chewing of betel. I found the signs of another passenger in my cabin, though I had been promised I should have it to myself. There was a

sun helmet in the other bunk, and very foreign baggage on the floor. I am sociable, I hope; but never when I am alone. This was too much. With the sun helmet was a book; Conrad's *Rescue,* in English. I flung out, churlish because there was not time to change into another ship and go elsewhere. Later in the day I went to the cabin to get my binoculars, and found there my cabin mate. He is a gentle Dutchman, and is genuinely sorry to intrude. I assured him that I was desolated because my tenancy of the cabin must annoy him. He sent for drinks and professed his love for all that is English. This must be sincere, for he declared he had read *Paradise Lost* in both English and Dutch; and he mentioned Conrad with his hands upraised because words completely failed him. He used to live at Bromley in Kent, and his wife was at school at Bideford in Devon. I remained there with him, and forgot why I wanted the binoculars.

July 3.—At sunrise to-day my Chinese boy brought me coffee, and handed me my pipe as though it were a scepter. I looked out of the cabin window to see where we were. I put down the coffee at once, where nothing could hold it, and it spread on the floor. This was excusable. Our ship was approaching the narrow strait between the islands of Lombok and Baly. If there had been no reward for overcoming the doldrums of a long voyage but the first light of day caught and bewildered by the forests and clouds of Agung and Ringani, the Peak of Baly and the Peak of Lombok, volcanoes which regard each other, supernal and terrible, over remote celestial kingdoms of cloud, then those small islands between the Java Sea and the Indian

Ocean would have been enough. It was the kind of reward which comes to a traveler when the gods forget that he is often discontented and unworthy.

We anchored off Ampenan, a village in a bay on Lombok's west side. There was a beach of black volcanic sand, a heavy surf, a line of palms so still they might have been cast in metal, and behind them heights that were merely blue shapes. In the clear green deeps alongside sharks were lazily and patiently patrolling for anything that might happen. They had nothing else to do, and so considered the *Savoe* was as good as any other waiting-place. Then—but how they came there I never saw—we were besieged by canoes, which would have looked unsafe on a pool, weighted with daring paddlers who were ready to face any wave while they had an inch of freeboard and boys to bail out the wash with bent palm leaves. I did not see what business the *Savoe* conducted at Ampenan. I was much too dazzled by gyrating canoeists who balanced themselves on rocking bamboos by their toes over leisurely sharks.

July 4.—We have lost the Englishman with his monocle. Heaven knows what he proposes to do in Lombok. We have added a Malay rajah and his ladies to our company. He is a wizened old man, barefooted, in *sarong* and jacket and a little turban. Even a voyager among these islands for the first time would not mistake that old man for merely another native. Once, at a mere hint from him, men had died. His mouth and eyes still are those of a man whose whims, if fantastic, have not always been futile. His wife is dressed like an old-fashioned suburban lady on the Sabbath, but she has added a barbaric tiara in pearls and trinkets which

suggests that she will revert to a Dyak custom after divine service is over.

Our lower deck is a *campong*, or native village, with a population even larger than the usual hamlet of huts. That deck is occupied from the stem to the stern. There are Arab and Chinese quarters, from which women are absent. But the Malays are one big family, unpartitioned. They are asleep on their mats, or they sit in groups, men and women, gambling with cards. There are messes of rice in great pots, strings of fish, melons, red earthenware jars of water, and queer smells. Cabbages and maize hang from the beams. The cocks crow, the parrots screech, and the children squat and stare like infant Buddhas at the ship's gear, and at myself when I pass. I hear there is never any trouble here through the ladies. Each man knows the other has a knife. Besides, as a ship's officer put it to me, "There is no trouble, because they have not the morality of Europeans."

July 5.—I have been trying to teach myself, with Mr. Potter's East Indian pilotage books and the charts to assist me, where I am going. But I have given up the task. I shall take what comes. It is clear this voyage will occupy two months, and yet we are not likely to be out of sight of land on a single day. We shall go north and south, and east and west, but with a general easterly bias. I abandoned my attempt to trace the course of our voyage when it developed into a ravel which had the equator entangled in it thrice in twenty-four hours. That was too much. But I did get a vague idea, from the large-scale charts, of the extent of Indonesia. It would want the Atlantic Ocean to give it elbow

room. There are 3,000 miles between Acheen Head, Sumatra, and New Guinea; and half as many between the Philippines and Melville Island, North Australia. Within those marks it is a pleasure to read the beautiful names of the seas—the Java Sea, the Flores Sea, the Banda Sea, the Arafura Sea, the Molucca Sea, and the Sea of Celebes. The islands dot the spaces like the stars in a chart of the heavens. And here I am, among the constellations. We passed the first item of the Spermode group two hours after lunch, and the captain thereupon went to the bridge, in mauve pajamas and a cigar; Dutch ships have their own customs. But all our officers are most friendly souls, and one imagines they are speaking English excellently until, among themselves, they show how much more familiar they are with their own language. They are able and versatile seamen, for this ship has to look after herself, in the way ships did in the past. She has her own company of cargo coolies, and her own shipping office, because our officers must buy and sell cargo, ship and stow, book passengers and inspect them for trouble of every kind, appraise trade opportunities for the use of headquarters in Batavia, and publish the news of the world on distant coasts. Our chief mate is even a good ethnologist. One should be that when one's duties are among the subtle possibilities of Malay, Papuan, Polynesian, Arab, Chinese, Japanese, and whites who are even more difficult and dangerous to label. It is sunset, and we are approaching Macassar.

CHAPTER XVII

A SHIP should have light when making Macassar. The Spermode Islands dot the sea about the southwest end of Celebes, and though the blue film of the waters there seems just tangible enough to float such fairy-like islands, yet it is best to con them by day, and from a wide berth. So your ship will approach Macassar either not much before sunrise or while a memory of the vanished day with a brief exaltation holds away the night. The approach to its harbor, when the sun is near the horizon, especially if there is a stillness before or after rain during the wet monsoon, would make you believe, looking ahead from the ship's bow, that "the storms all weathered and the ocean crost," you were nearing that "favored isle, where billows never roar, and brighter seasons smile." For there is no end to the illusions of travel—indeed, they are the best of it, and part of the fun is in seeing them break. Half an hour of the beatific! What more should we expect? It is an experience long enough for the good of any mortal traveler. At the end of that time you are alongside a modern wharf and the bunker coal. Macassar is properly proud of its modern facilities, as they are called. Luckily it is easy to escape from them.

The city, though old, with all the history of the Malay islands from the sixteenth century in its streets, native, Portuguese, Dutch, and English, has still behind it a

land of which we know hardly more than we know of the future of true religion. Macassar is, in fact, only a market place on a beach where gather the traders and ships from hundreds of islands about it. With the exception of Singapore—a very much greater place—Macassar is, I think, the most interesting town in the East Indies. You soon get tired of Batavia and Sourabaya, sporadic cities where the distances, which would be very little in a temperate climate, in Java are almost impassable gulfs of heat and dust. And even native inland cities, where the Javanese are still listlessly protecting the relics of their traditions and their native crafts that have not yet been foundered in the flood of shoddy from Western civilization, soon weary a traveler. He sees with his own unaccustomed eyes that often what the natives pretend is their traditional craft was made by machinery in the likeness of the original at Manchester or Dresden. But tourists do not see Macassar. It is aside from their track. There is no need for Macassar to deceive chance visitors, and to deceive its regular visitors, the traders, requires careful thought and takes all its time.

It has its own atmosphere, which is largely, though not altogether, caused by the fish which is spread out in half-acres to dry in the sun near the waterside. Its heat, too, is not a smothering weight, but is bearable. You can get about on foot. The natives are a lively and sturdy tribe—its men were active and resourceful pirates in the past—and so the byways of Macassar are attractive with figures which make drab and meager a visitor's memory of his prosperous industrial city of the hard north. And the Chinese are established in

Macassar. But then they are everywhere. There is not an island in the archipelago without its Chinese trader; probably an honest one, too. You cannot help liking the Chinese. Talk of the tenacity, the artless and audacious enterprise, the courage, resourcefulness, delicacy in humbugging, and the other qualities of the Anglo-Saxon which have made him what he is—all that would tax a Chinaman's polite resolution to keep his smile well hidden. He was like that when a child ten thousand years ago. He sits in front of his shop in Macassar to-day—an open shop, without windows or door—where there are great paper lanterns pendent, and a red banner with letters of gold. He smokes his opium pipe. He wears short black trousers and a blue jacket and a little black cap, and sees Heaven knows what ancient dream through his horn spectacles. His face is tranquil and benevolent. His tiny daughter with her long black pigtail and fringe, an incredibly animated ivory doll dressed in miniature cotton trousers, and his little son with a clean-shaven poll and dressed in nothing at all, play with dice at his feet. He can never be beaten or outlived. He is unconquerable and deathless. He has forgotten more than our culture has had the time to acquire. He is such a friendly soul, too, if you are sufficiently cautious when accepting him. He has his own theater in Macassar; a safely fascinating place once you have subdued the magic of its orchestra. And his temples! There is in Macassar one which will draw you every day you are in the port. You will find yourself outside it again, lost in the attempt to unravel its involuted fantasy, and without knowing you were going to it, though it is in a back street. To stay

a season in that back street of Macassar, in one of the Chinese houses opposite the temple, would be greater fun than to explore every tomb in Egypt. Nobody appears to see you in that street. Not any of the strange eyes which pass look at yours. You might not be there. And all the doors in that street are shut to you, spiritually and in fact.

Well, not all. Perhaps not every day. A door there opened to me one evening. It was not my fault. I was taken by an Englishman who knew that Chinaman, and who introduced me as a man from Limehouse. The result was astonishing. I had to refuse all that beer and brandy, and, instead, desired orangeade. It was good orangeade. It was wonderful orangeade. I remember that night now only as a bright but distorted dream in which move the shadowy figures of a fable of Cathay. But an hour came when I knew, at least, that I must leave my friends; and in the street, alone, and in the Macassar dark, I assembled my intelligence, which told me that my Chinese friend, in expansive hospitality, had vastly improved my innocent drink with cognac. How was I to manage the gangplank of the *Savoe?* That had to be faced. Anyhow, I argued to myself, you can sleep at the foot of it. But at the foot of the precarious inclined plane, in the light of a ship's lantern, stood a little child, the daughter of a Dutch passenger, who was just waiting for a man like me to come along. Her mother ordered me to carry her daughter aboard. Now how did I do it, and without a fault? I wish I knew.

CHAPTER XVIII

When the morning is very young and the light has but little heat in it, Macassar's native dock, with its quays of coral rock, and a gathering of schooners and canoes, is almost merrily absurd with a fabulous beauty and a suggestion of wild and secret adventure. The little schooners are gypsies for color, their names are stars and flowers—Bintang this and Buroh that—their brailed sails are sheets of light, and their reflections on the languid water, which is an uncertain blue mirror, are slowly dissolving flakes of lightning and rainbow. The Malays sit on their decks, cooking breakfast. There is a smell of dry fish, copra, and wood smoke. They look so frail, those little antique models, with their tripod masts, their sweeps, and low bows and upstanding galleried sterns. But it happens that once I saw one driving in the dangerous currents, a breeze chasing her from the Indian Ocean, in the channel between the islands of Sumbawa and Lombok, and the impulse was to cheer.

When it is better to find some shade you can turn into Macassar's main street, its bazaar, and then discover, looking into the bags, boxes, casks, and baskets, for how few of the commodities in this part of the world you have even a name. Some stuff it is possible to guess at, though who eats desiccated frogs and dried cuttlefish? But most of it is mummified and enigmatic.

The irregular buildings have roofs of red tiles which cast a good shade from widely projecting eaves. They are of timber and stone, lime-washed in blues and yellows, and if you chance to look up out of the stream of dark humanity you see dim figures in upper balconies who are watching the street below, as grave and still as decorative images.

A stranger might hesitate about entering the great market on the outskirts of the town. The crowd there is so active, so alien, so intent on its private affairs, that some courage seems necessary for pushing into it. But the Malays are the politest people on earth. You will be hardly conscious that you are seen. There will be no importunity to buy; and if you understand bazaar Malay, any stallkeeper will cheerfully lose customers to explain to you what his wares are and what has to be done with them; what, for example, the name of that curious fish is, where and how it can be caught, and what to do when preparing it for the pot so that it may nourish and not cause death with convulsions. After a time, too, you will not be startled by what on the floor looks like the evidence of a recent bloody affray. Here, as elsewhere in Indonesia, the people chew areca nut, and those sanguinary blotches are only the spittle of a multitude. Presently you will get almost used to it. In any case, the Malays, men and women, will go on smearing sireh leaves with a little lime, put in some areca nut, and some rose petals or other aromatic herb, leisurely chew their packets, and change the sensitive mouths of their youth into the semblance of an accident.

No port in the Indies has much to show that is more interesting than its fish market. That is but fair. Not

many visitors may find entrance to its best clubs, or may know the joy, even at long last, of meeting its superior people. But we all may go to the fish market. The choice fruits of the tropics, and its solid vegetables, may suggest that home is, after all, only about the third or fourth turning round the corner. But the fish! What crude and vulgar creatures cod and halibut would look in the company gathered from the submarine gardens of the tropics! Nothing is vulgar there, nothing crude; though there are many creatures which look terrifying, or instantaneous, or unnamably wicked, or are shaped and enameled in a way which suggests that they escaped at midnight from the designs in the Chinese temple or an Oriental jeweler's workshop.

To learn what hardly credible living things may come from the reefs and atolls, it is better to go to the fish market in the early morning. That the fishermen dare to handle such objects is surprising. Often enough one would as soon experiment with the unknown mechanism of a bomb. Even the fishermen regard a number of these creatures as of the devil, for some of the spines, gill covers, and skins are as venomous as an adder's fangs; and the sea serpents, those brightly colored ribbons common enough among the waves, and all as deadly as cobras, cause a surprising number of deaths to those whose business is with fish net and traps. One morning in Macassar's fish market there was a man who seemed to have supposed that the fish he had caught was too awful or too bulky to allow him to bring in more than the head, as a trophy. He showed me that head. It was as big and heavy as a mastiff's. It had the same expression of sullen interest and ready

hostility, but with larger teeth. It was olive green in color, with yellow spots. Its name its captor did not know. He had not seen one before. He knew only that it was *ikan*—fish. After all, it was just as well to inform a stranger that what he saw was *ikan kapala*—the head of a fish. It was not a case for mere guesswork.

There were cuttlefish that day looking like opalescent lamps in which the light was hardly yet extinct; and the crabs might have been an astrologer's imaginative effort at Cancer. The perch, of course, were a host, and more varied than tulips because they differed so in size and color. One of them is famous in these waters, a superb fellow in scarlet, *ikan merah*. The common fish were mackerel, the bonito the most noticeable, for it is often of the size and rotundity of a small pig. There were young sharks, and several species of rays and skates, a few of them too big for one man to lift. The coryphene was there, the dolphin of sailors, which expires prismatically; though that fellow must be witnessed when just caught, for a mere description of his display when dying would never be believed. In the market place the coryphene is remarkable only for its suggestion of immense speed, and the vicious upturned lower jaw and teeth designed to take the flying fish as they drop back into the sea after a flight which was not swift enough to carry them from pursuing calamity. Many of the creatures were unknown to me, and I fancy some might have surprised an ichthyologist.

Yet each morning the display in Macassar's fish market is differently ordered. The program is never repeated. I could never think of it as a market place,

or that I was looking at mere provender. It was manifest the sea was still experimenting with life and was in no hurry. It was dissatisfied with its work each day as soon as the designs were finished, and so threw them out to us as waste. Then it began on other effects. That place in Macassar, therefore, was hardly a market. It was less that than the studio of an artist resembles Billingsgate. Macassar was merely getting daily what the rich and vast workshop outside considered was not quite what it meant to do. And that workshop has, of course, plenty of time and light in which to satisfy itself. The sun and the warm seas have all eternity in which to play with life, to shape and color it to the likeness of whatever perfection was once hinted. The Italian jeweler of the Renaissance never approached the easy opulence, the merry variety of ideas, and the wild ornamentation, which can be seen any bright morning on the slabs of that fish market of Celebes. There I saw the ocean's last hilarious but puzzling jokes. Fun was being poked at us—derision made of our own dull and monotonous efforts at creation.

But when you look out from Macassar's beach to the place where those wild forms and vivid dyes are native, they are the less surprising. Anything might happen out there. Out by the Spermode Islands it is not the sea. It is a blue radiance, as still as the ecstasy of an intense passion, and the areas of coral rock betray in blinding incandescence what secret energy is at work.

CHAPTER XIX

The warehouse and office of the shipping firm at Macassar whose principal acts as British consul assure a wanderer from home that his affairs may be there considered of consequence. I noticed that office with approval before I knew it was under my flag. It appeared to be a solid structure of the Portuguese occupation, and its calm was cloistral. Along the hot street it cooled the sidewalk with a roofed colonnade. The white columns, in that sun, were shafts of light, and under them the open doors of the warehouse admitted to warm gloom and the smell of spices. I stepped into the shadows, where I could just make out old beams and a vista of bales, and snuffed it up. I thought this must be the smell of Macassar. Perhaps smelling it is as good a way of getting the history of a place as any other. When I called there for my letters, respectfully waiting for attention in the light of an upper story where clerks in white linen were silent over great leather volumes, presently I found a difficulty in raising my voice above a whisper in that immemorial hush. A clerk approached, listened to me, and vanished without a word. Not important enough to be noticed? But presently I saw him beckoning, in a side aisle, like a grave priest to an initiate, and I followed him past a motionless guardian of the sanctuary—that figure might have been a statue, or it might have been only the Malay

equivalent of a hall porter—to an inner room, and he left me. I was alone there, with a matured table on which documents were orderly, and two chairs. I sank into the leathern deep of one, and looked at Chinese almanacs on the wall. I like Chinese almanacs. They are always decorated with figures of Chinese girls in embroidered tunics and trousers. Every one of these girls has a black fringe, and her expression beyond doubt is exactly what would lead Chinese soldiers to adorn their dugouts with national almanacs. That is what interests me; I try to find the angle where a Chinaman would stand to admire something different from what I see at mine. There were two large maps of Celebes, and they made that great island greater than ever with blank spaces which had no names. On a sideboard were many samples of mace, gums, and tortoise shell. There was a chart of the East Indies, and advertisements of ships and their sailing dates. I could have been contented there for a long time. The feeling came over me that I should like to sit at that table and play with ships and produce. But when the proprietor entered it was certain that there was a game at which I should be badly beaten. There could be no doubt he knew more about it. He knew more of a good many things; but his bearing gave me the easy notion that his valuable time was for me to spend as I chose. He appeared to understand Europe better than most Europeans, and though it would have been easy for me to have disagreed with him about Mr. Lloyd George, I did not care to do so. I had not brought the Welsh mountains with me and did not feel equal to going back for them. There were my letters; and outside afterward it occurred to me, when I re-

membered what is so often written of British consuls, that occasionally there may be bad travelers as well as unfortunate consuls.

That night, in a ship so still and quiet that it surprised me to find I could switch on the cabin light, I read in my bunk Wallace's story of his visit to Maros. It is a passage I know well. The naturalist so clearly was surprised by Maros, and could not forget it. Maros is about thirty miles behind Macassar, and here veritably I was in Macassar; yet a peep at Maros was no easier than though I were still at home. Indeed, it seemed more distant than ever, as though time and not distance separated us. But in London I was unaware of the meaning of thirty miles in Celebes.

When I opened my eyes again it was daylight, and the consul's clerk stood by my bunk, regarding me in respectful sadness, as though I were a hero lying in state. When he saw I was awake, then his hat, which he held against his breast, began to revolve in his hands. He apologized. But would I care to go to Maros? The consul's motor-car was beside the ship.

We went. The consul's clerk had never seen Maros. Too busy! And on Saturdays and Sundays there were swimming and tennis. We passed a swamp overgrown with the plumes of nipa palms, and nearly ran over an eagle while watching the water for alligators. The great bird got up from under the bonnet as the brakes ground our wheels on the dust. Our way led us over flat country. There were many buffaloes in the rice fields; they were more noticeable than usual because so many of them were albinos. The villagers were husking cocoanuts, or were out cutting acres of rice stalk by stalk with

little knives. Ahead of us, eastward, was a high blue rampart to the plain, and in an hour it was right over us.

This wall was broken but unscalable, soaring immediately from the plain to a height perhaps of a thousand feet. It was an array of pinnacles so long and sharp, chasms so abrupt, clefts so narrowly cut, and all clothed with shrub even when the face appeared to be perpendicular, that it was the most freakish landscape I have seen, and was as surprising as though in a retired spot Nature were amusing herself with some miraculous fun of her ordinary media. Here and there was a bare surface of pale limestone rock, with massive coagulations and stalactites, like the keep of a castle in Gothic legend. The rock appeared to be as cellular as sponge; a fact, perhaps, which accounted for the vegetation clinging to the steeps. Presently the wall stopped us. A precipice was on one hand, and on the other an incline of water pouring smoothly over domes of rock. Where the water came from could not be seen. The green crags towered round it, ascending from shadow into upper sunlight. The water came over the hummocks as clear and still as glass, only occasionally giving a burst of foam. Now, in the East Indies a traveler cannot help remarking how poor that region is in butterflies compared with tropical America. Perhaps in insect life the Amazon country is the richest in the world. One sees more butterflies in greater variety of species in a Brazilian forest clearing in an hour than would be seen in Java in a week. But the inclosing walls and tiny beaches of this strange watercourse of Celebes were distracting with swift and brilliant insects. They were

at rest like flowers on the dry rocks of the stream, or were jostling one another for moisture on the damp sand at the margin, or were soaring like birds athwart the cliffs.

We were told there was a path by which we could reach some upper falls, and we found it, though occasionally it left us without guidance in a dark cave, or on a bowlder with the water heaping past, or waist deep in the herbs of an inclosure to which there seemed no way out. The sky was but a narrow road of blue above us. In one smooth pool on the opposite side a party of natives were bathing, but so dim was the water under the overhanging cliff that even their bright Malay dresses were indistinct. Some of these people came over to us and conducted us to a shelf from which we watched the water shooting through an upper chasm in a smooth vitreous weight. We appeared to be at the bottom of a profound cleft in the earth. The sun was high enough now to spill day over us. The shaft was full of light. The natives were sociable, sitting near to watch us, though only rarely did they make a shy comment. They appeared to consider us as of greater interest than anything in their strange land. My odd occupation, the collecting of diptera, compelled them at last out of their shyness. They helped. What they thought of it I cannot say, but presently a party of their children came to me with a present. It was a flying lizard, and from their jolly smiles I have a suspicion that the joke was against me.

CHAPTER XX

WHETHER I looked at the grotesque shape of Celebes on the chart, or leaned on the ship's rail to watch the unfolding of its coast, I could hardly believe it. The map shows the island as a bundle of peninsulas tied in the middle and flung anyhow on the ocean. There Celebes sprawls, with none of its long limbs straightened out. It lies between Borneo and New Guinea, and is akin to neither. For that matter, it is like no other island in any of the seas. It is big enough to be noticeable—its area is greater than that of Java—yet few people seem to have heard of it.

I suppose we all know Borneo. That island is sufficiently familiar to cause mirth in any London music hall by the mention of its name. As for New Guinea, so many sensational books are now appearing about it that our nerves no longer respond. But Celebes has been overlooked; and that, when you come to think of it, is not at all a surprising fate to befall what is entirely and freely original. It has received less critical attention than Laputa. We are much less certain about it than we are of such evident things as the subconscious self.

The fact that the old and famous port of Macassar stands at its southwest corner makes no difference. Macassar is not Celebes. Probably few of the natives of Macassar know that their city is Celebesian. There

is a steam tram, which it is polite to call a railroad, that goes out of Macassar for about sixty miles, nobody knows why and few people know where. If I had met a dinosaur I should not have been more startled than when that train accosted me while sauntering one day outside Macassar. I had never been warned of it. Its snorting was unnatural. Heaven knows where the Macassarenes stable it when the queer creature comes home at night. Macassar is merely a convenient meeting place for traders to sort out the gums, spices, copra, tortoise shell, mother-o'-pearl, and bird skins which have been collected in the multitude of islands east of Java.

Celebes must have bewildered the early navigators with its odd and infolded shape. They could rarely have been sure whether they were still there, or had found another island. The very appearance of its shores, you would think, ought to have prompted in some modern explorer that feeling which drives the curious to wander mystified till they discover the center of a maze. I know how it worked on me. Yet there do not appear to have been any famous journeys through the island. I kept my own foolish impulse under prudent control; yet one day, when leaning with a young Dutch naval officer on the rail of our trading steamer, both of us staring at Celebes, he became suddenly mad or ecstatic, though he was a shy and quiet man, with pale hair and questioning blue eyes.

"Let us land," he cried aloud; "let us go there!" He pointed to a dark inlet in which nothing had happened, by the look of it, since it was made, except perhaps

some trifling piracy and murder. "Let us walk on from there till we come to the other sea!"

That was it. A lovely, seductive, and most likely a deadly coast. You couldn't keep the eyes off it. If, growing limp and weary with the heat and the uneventful day and a sea which appeared to have lapsed into the notion that we had at last reached the Age of Gold and that the lion and the lamb were reconciled and sentimental, you went to your cabin to read, you never stayed there more than ten minutes while the ship was cruising along Celebes; before ten minutes were up you were on deck again. Why pretend we don't know what song the sirens sang? We know quite well. We have heard it more than once. But the song looks so idiotic when we set it down literally. We are forced, therefore, to make an academic mystery of it, a method which preserves for our edification in idleness so many of the classic topics which help bookmen to a bare living. God forbid that I should deprive them of an item of it. I will omit a transcript of the sirens' song for that reason, and also because it would cause Ulysses, Mungo Park, and many others, including the Dutch naval officer and myself, to look so embarrassed. Why do we ever listen to the sirens' enticement? Well, why do men put feathers in their hats and go to war? Why do some of us love wearing regalia and making secret signs? Why are men abstemious when there is wine about, and smugglers when there isn't? And above all, what is it we find in Beethoven or in *Christobal?* Nothing that can be quoted on the Stock Exchange; nothing which can be stated explicitly without arousing mirth in our enemies and indignation in our friends; for

it would involve the whole mystery of the arts and the philosophic reduction of beauty to its elements. Nevertheless, Ulysses did well when he tied himself to a mast.

I tie myself to a mast, as it were, while Celebes is in sight. Our ship all day moves past a tumult of crenellated ridges, heights often so sharp and aberrant that how the forest stands upon them is a mystery. Those hills are unexplored. Dense jungle darkens them from the clouds to the shore. Celebes is upon the equator. But the heat on the ship is only as though halcyon weather were giving a trifle too much to the sun. Our steamer sometimes threads the channels of the skirting islands whose shores, like those of the mainland, are gloomed by forest. Areas of the coast become thin and ghostly when diaphanous vapors are caught on the crags. The bright gauze then spreads and settles below. There is no wind. We draw abeam of an occasional beach, a thread of gold between the cobalt sea and the somber forest. No man ever lands there. The sea is empty. There is nothing living in sight but the frigate birds, black shapes high over the water with long angular pinions outspread and motionless, soaring and circling in the slow leisure of timeless spirits. There is nothing else at sea except the purple shadows of clouds and the stippling of beryl where the coral is only just submerged. Once Drake passed this way; but it looks as though nobody has been here since. Our steamer idles along, apparently without a purpose, as in a frivolous escape from scheduled and consequential duties. We are acquitted and released from all that makes men feel serious, active, and important.

At sunset one day the sea was a fathomless mirror

because the hulls of cumulous clouds had sunk in it beneath the inverted violet peaks of Celebes. Celebes floated athwart two heavens. Over Borneo, where the sun vanished, the basaltic horizon clouds were the broken ramparts of a world wrecked and lost. The fires of the final calamity were nearly out. Only from the base of that wall did the last day of earth burst in one thin explosion of scarlet. It spread no distance. Night quenched it at once. I stood at the ship's rail, watching the place where the forlorn hope had failed.

"Mr. Tomlinsohn," said a voice beside me, "will you have a gin and bitter?" It was our chief engineer. He comes from Amsterdam.

CHAPTER XXI

Our sailors are Malays. My first impression of them was that they were languid and ladylike seamen. No doubt the captain had been unable to get white men for the voyage. He was forced to do what was possible with mariners whose headdress is neat and pleasing millinery, and who sometimes wear attractive lace bodices. One man I saw hauling on a rope, whose jowl itself was as threatening as a bare knife, wore a blouse with an elegant design in birds and flowers. His trousers, which were more or less white, had lavender stripes. But make no mistake about it. There would be fewer lives lost when a ship comes to trouble if white seamen knew how to lower boats and get them away as expeditiously as our Malays. When we see a grove of cocoanuts we stand in. I hear no orders. Our men appear to be loafing. The master is on the bridge. The chief mate is on the forecastle head. The leadsman is in the chains. The leadsman chants, and the bright apple-green water of a reef with its fringe of snow insensibly approaches. And I am still listening to the echoes from the hills of our roaring cable when, as if our boats were sentient and behaved like retriever dogs, they are already away and making for the beach. For our men get plenty of practice. In the Gulf of Tomino alone we called at about fifteen little places in one day, anchored, and got the boats out.

It would be useless to name these beaches. They are known only to the Dutchmen of the K.P.M. (It is easier to write those letters than to say Koinklijke Paketvaart Maatshappij.) These steamers serve all the Malay Islands. They touch at places where there is nothing to mark land but a tree or two upright on universal glass, lost under vast and radiant clouds. What is the use of naming such spots? One sunrise our siren blared when we were idling along Celebes. Another anchorage! I was going to the upper deck and overtook the captain. Where were we? At Paleleh!

But what and where is Paleleh? I had never heard of it. On the map before me now it is not even marked. Yet surely it should be there; I am certain that once I saw it. Why does the map so casually doubt me? I must have been there, and it ought to be fairly easy to recognize the place again. There was a narrow gulf going deeply into the land, and in the pallor of dawn the moon's ghost had stopped rolling when on the verge of a declivity. As it was, it was hanging only just above the water. An islet was at the entrance of the bay, on a floor of silver. Every tree on it was plain, but as though seen in a dream. The sun came up over a tumbled sea of acute hills, and to them we headed. His rays struck down profound chasms toward us. Over the starboard bow was an immense dark wall, with a threshold of chrysolite athwart the mirror of the bay. That vague band of greenish light at the foot of the wall began to crystallize, and the crystals became the fronds of cocoanut palms. Set within the groves of that beach were the huts of Paleleh.

There cannot be any doubt about it. My map is at

fault. I landed at Paleleh, and I remember a shop kept by a Chinaman—on consideration, however, that is not evidence. The shops in all these places are kept by Chinamen. Nor can I pretend that the fact that nothing was happening at Paleleh proves anything. Nothing has got its work cut out to prove Anything. Yet I must insist that the arrival of our steamer caused little interest, even among the children. I thought the folk of Paleleh had passed out of time, and so knew all. They had been through every experience. Their sun announced itself every day to them in just that way above mountain forests; its light fell in great rays from upper embrasures. Their sea was always of the same colors. Men sometimes came to them from the other world and then went again. An astonishing butterfly was hovering over the scarlet blossoms of a shrub by the foreshore; a group of children by the shrub, no less surprising with their colors, were as indifferent to the creature as though they knew all the wonders of Paradise. Our own Malays were wading up to their middles from beach to boats and back again, carrying bags of copra, till the hot air was loaded with the oily smell of it.

I sat on a beam at the end of a jetty, waiting for the steamer to warn me to board her again. Near me a canoe was anchored by a large stone and a cable of rattan. I could see her thin cable oblique in a transparency to where her anchor rested in three fathoms; and it was then I noticed that the water in the shadow of the canoe was a wavering and translucent sapphire. Is it likely that I could have invented such a color as that? The sea might not have been below my feet; only occasional ripples betrayed the division between air

and water. A shoal of little fish glanced in electric flashes amid the branches of a bush of coral, and a larger fish, black and gold like a tiger, hovered over them. Pipe fishes ran their long snouts along the surface. A sea snake, banded yellow and black, threaded the submarine garden and serpentined into a hole in some rocks. A score of Paleleh people were sprawled on the old timbers of the wharf. They had nothing to talk about and nothing to do. They could have taken no less notice of me if I had been invisible. I certainly got the feeling myself that there was no reason in such a place why a steamer should ever sound a warning, or that, if it did, one should ever heed it.

CHAPTER XXII

BEFORE this book is done I shall have to speak of Maguire; and it had better be here while there is nothing else to do. Borneo is on one side of us and Celebes on the other, and I don't know which the *Savoe* will visit next, for both are at the same distance, and she appears to be heading for neither.

I had heard of Maguire in the most unlikely places. His name would slip into a conversation early and naturally, but, so far as I could see, without occasion. It might have been waiting about, in the air, in the shadows, ready to take any excuse for prolonging its mortality. "Once when I was with Maguire . . ." It was always supposed that I must know him. There was never a prelude, no hint of a face or a figure. Everybody ought to know Maguire, I had to suppose, or else lose the richness of the stories about him. But I had never met Maguire, and nothing that I was told of him made me feel that in him something rare had eluded me. For nothing was ever said which made him plain. Yet this man had so impressed himself upon those who knew him that they could not pass a few odd days with a stranger in a coasting steamer or a government rest-house without thinking of him.

When two or three travelers somehow got round to Maguire again, by candle light after dinner in a rest-house, I then began to watch the shadows alter as the silent Malays troubled the darkness beyond us, or gaze

into thatch, searching for the rustling lizards I could hear but could not make out. It was not much good listening to what was said about that man. I knew it would be no more than hints, with all the clews left out for me. They seemed to think it was unnecessary to say more.

What was curious was their note of respect. They were not respectful men. Respect out here for an absent wayfarer is certainly strange. The climate and customs of this coast and forest do little to put us in a good light. But even so, I could not glimpse Maguire as a reality. He was an amusing myth, if anything at all. Besides, nobody is expected to take quite seriously much that he is likely to hear in the ships and the coastal towns from Singapore to Zamboanga by way of Borneo. One hears many odd tales, but their chief virtue is that usually one has plenty of time for them. Maguire was like the stories one heard of adventures on unfrequented distant islands, of queer native customs, of accidents in grotesque circumstances which could have reached their perfection of monstrous form only after long usage and polishing in the cabins of many ships and in many random hostels. Perhaps once there had been a man named Maguire, and a few words about him were still being passed round because they could not be stopped, and because nobody really knew whether he was alive or dead, and did not care.

One day a chance companion I found in a village on the coast of Borneo, after mentioning the now familiar legend, said he was going to see Maguire that afternoon. Would I come? The Irishman was staying in the place.

Was that an invitation to add an aspect of veracity to an unsubstantial story? Of course! It was supposed that I would forget it—have something else to do that afternoon; for out East there is rarely a need to see in these invitations more than idle politeness, because conversation, too, in this moist heat, becomes slack and aimless, and therefore easily friendly. So I was greatly surprised, when comfortably reading, to see my friend stroll in and affect reproach that I was not dressed like himself, for an immediate visit to the substance of this familiar legend.

I had to go. There was a large native house built on stilts above the ground, with the usual groups of cocoanut and betel palms about it. We saw an elderly Malay, a lean and dignified figure—a *datoh*, or chief, I understood—who met us at the foot of a ladder which led up to the door of a great hut. Within the shadow of that door some figures watched us, which we knew were women by the brightness of their dress. Near the chief were several little children staring at us, all of them naked but one tiny girl, who wore a silver leaf pendent from a silver chain round her hips. My friend and the chief conversed apart.

I was told at last that Maguire was not there. "He has been here," the *datoh* says, "but he has gone again, and nobody knows where."

Nobody knew where! Of course not. I looked at the chief, who nodded seriously, and half turned and waved an arm toward the forest. I stared solemnly at an indigo range of hills set far back in the dark unexplored land beyond that clearing, and nodded as sagely as the *datoh*. The Malay smiled sardonically.

There came a long interval in which I heard no more about him. In fact, we had something else to think about at that time. It was near the beginning of the rainy season—much too near for me, for with yet another chance companion I was at last traversing the forests of the inland mountains. I was not happy about it, for the country was new to me; new to most white men, in fact, for where we were it was unsurveyed. And my companion, who was leading our little party, confessed to difficulties in a way which convinced me that if I did not take charge of an expedition which was no affair of mine, then it might finish up in a ludicrous and unfortunate way, and that it stood a good chance of finishing in such a way even if I did.

I believe the Malays with us divined what was in my mind. We were standing in perplexity and extreme discomfort in a jungle track which had been made by the beasts, listening there to my companion's confession of despair through being at fault in his quest. The natives must have known what opinion I was forming, because when I looked up they were watching me closely and were paying no attention to the other white man. Some show of resolution and indifference in adversity—which I did not feel in the least—certainly had to be given this business of two Europeans. With a fine display of the use of compass and chart a point was fixed upon, and we took another route.

We camped for the night. There were sandflies, a mug of coffee, and nothing to eat. It would certainly rain. Our wet clothes were blotched with blood because of leech bites. I cursed that night the folly of my impulse to a new experience. I had found an adventure

now, without doubt. "If we could only meet Maguire," groaned my despairing companion. That was the onlv bit of fun of the day.

We continued our journey next morning through a forest and up a shrouded declivity, which was so gloomy and fantastic that I could not help glancing apprehensively into its silent and heated shadows. But we saw nothing, of course, except the tracks of animals. We plowed up to the knees through horrible bogs and then stopped to disconnect from our bodies the leeches which we had picked up in them. We paused for a rest by a clear stream in the woods, across which the trail we were to follow went up still more into the shades. Our men stood about, their packs on the ground, picking off the beastly worms from their brown limbs. The columns of great trees inclosed us in a wreckage of vines. The trunks mounted into a silent darkness. These tropical forests are not so friendly as English woods.

I was waiting for my companion to own up to a disposition to start again, and was gazing up the track we were to follow, when two terriers appeared. They were not native dogs. They were much too independent and truculent for that. They stopped when they saw us, cocked their ears, barked, and looked back to somebody. A slight but lively figure appeared, making long, energetic strides over the forest litter. Its face was hidden by the broad brim of a felt hat. It wore a neat khaki tunic, riding breeches, and puttees. It was a soldierly figure in that dress, with a rifle under its arm. "Why, there's Maguire!" exclaimed my surprised companion to himself.

The figure stopped a few paces off and surveyed our

most unbusiness-like outfit. It did not seem to notice me at all. But I knew at a glance who now would take over our little affair. This man, Maguire, was going to take charge of us,—that is to say, if he lived. The translucent pallor of his shrunken and hairless face was ghastly. The eyes were alive, however. They were restless, abrupt, and intent. Their instant bright regard seemed to penetrate. I was impressed, but a little repelled also, for somehow the pallor and the intensity of force suggested by this slender figure gave a hint of coldness and cruelty.

"Been sick?" he was asked.

"Fever, and nothing but durians to eat for a fortnight."

While the two of them were talking, I undid one of the packs and got out a bottle of whisky.

"If you've lived on durians for a fortnight, what about a drop of this?"

Our new friend stared at the bottle, then smiled a slow and beautiful smile. "This saves my life," he said.

Maguire decided for us. I did not hear what the decision was, and did not trouble to find out. I was far from sure that I should like the man, but I was quite sure that his was the only word worth having in that place. One only had to look at him. I should go where he led. He and his rifle started off with decision enough, quickening our pace, somehow giving more activity to the Malays and inspiring my despondent companion with an ardor from Heaven knows what source. I put away my chart. We forded unknown rivers continually, waded through swamps, climbed hills, and swung

down through the jungle on the other side; and all at a pace and without a rest which would have caused some of us to complain bitterly a few hours before. Our leader never looked back and never stopped. He expected us to manage difficulties in his own way. If a man with fever, who had starved for a fortnight, could go like that on a mouthful of whisky, I wondered what he could do when he was at his best.

He shot a wild pig, and got us to a small hut at last, where, with the right kind of fire, which had been impossible in the dank forest, we had what must have been the most enjoyable dinner ever spread on a floor. That hut was on the slope of a clearing, in a narrow valley, and below us a river was turbulent over rocks with the first impulse of the rains. We sat on a log, he and I, looking across and yawning, and watching vast storm clouds gather about the sunset. A respect, at least, began to form for that strange man, perhaps because he gave a comfortable feeling of security where there had been none before. His speech was ironical, yet in such short, quick sentences that the unwary might have thought the man was a simpleton. For a very brief time I myself thought so, till I got from him a shaft which was no accident, but was aimed to hit me where I felt it. But Maguire did not smile, though I laughed aloud. He had my bearings before I had got his. Did he know London? He smiled.

"You can keep your great cities," he said. He was whittling a stick, and held it away from him while he shut one eye to scrutinize its straightness. "One day in Singapore, when I have to go, is enough for me," he remarked. "It's better here."

"Why, what's the matter with the cities? I've been wishing lately I was back in one."

"I guess you have been. You would. But I never do. This is all right for me. I know what things are here."

"We know what they are in the cities, I suppose."

Across the river, a mile away, as it fell dark a local storm thundered and flashed.

"Another sector catching it to-night," said the man in the dark beside me.

"What's the game?" I asked. "A local raid?"

Maguire chuckled. Then he said: "The Somme told me all I wanted to know of Europe—that and the Vimy Ridge and some odd corners. If you smart city people arrange a show like that again, don't worry about me. I shall be fine here with the orang-utans."

My now invisible partner said more, which would have been allusive except for the easy derision which his fun did not sufficiently moderate. I got the idea that I was included in his mockery. Then he began to chant softly a very indecorous song, a specialty of the Australian soldiers when they felt most hilarious on the march. I knew it and joined in. Maguire thereupon broke loose, and together we bawled the offensive words at the mute desolation of central Borneo, just as once they had been shouted in defiance of the nightmare in France.

For some time after that he took care of us, and what otherwise would have been a region where men like myself most likely would have died, he turned into an attractive and adventurous prospect. The Malays, wherever we met them, greeted our leader as though he

were good fortune. Certainly we never found a difficulty—though sometimes I thought they were insuperable—which did not vanish as soon as Maguire went to it.

I lost count of the days, and often could not have guessed within a score of miles of our place on the map. That did not matter. It is something like a miracle that another human soul, without knowing what it is doing, should change the look of the world to us, turn a steaming forest full of unknown dangers into an exhilarating pleasure, and make even the loathsome leeches, hunger, and the thought of fever only the jokes of the place.

The rains, rather before they were due, began in almost continual seriousness. We had to plunge into and half swim some of the streams. The leeches increased by myriads. Darkness settled down on the hills, penetrated, like something palpable, into the everlasting woods, and remained there, a settled gloom. We were never dry. Maguire was working round to the hut by the river where we had spent the first night with him.

But something had gone wrong with that country. The hills had become morasses and the low ground was water. The jungle was flooded for miles. But Maguire was concerned about a Chinaman he had left in that hut, and he was going to reach it. To me it seemed impossible. We were thwarted at every approach. And it still rained, as though the solid earth were doomed and there would never be dry land any more. Maguire at first was comical at any new check, with eloquent outbursts against Chinamen and their entire uselessness and inconsequence. Let the beggar die. Then we would

turn back as if he had abandoned his quest. Soon, though, we found he was only trying another device.

At length the man became silent and serious. We had no more of his fun; and for twenty hours he and I alone toiled through that inferno of water, mud, and trees, in a menacing silence and twilight of the earth. That fellow's energy and his tireless and intense mind took me along, indifferent to anything that could happen now, as though his body and spirit were sufficient for two men, for any number of men.

Within an hour of night we came to a vantage above our hut, and that river, once so low and picturesque, was now a swollen power destroying the country. It had no confines. It was driving irresistibly through the jungle of the lower slopes, carrying acres of trees with it. Its deep roar shook the soul. A patch of land near us, which yet was unsubmerged, was alive with pigs and deer.

Our hut, though it had been high above the river, now had the water around its walls. A hundred yards of eddying but quieter river separated us from it. Beyond it again our canoe was tugging violently at its tether, which was attached to a tree. In a few minutes its nose would be pulled under. And the Chinaman was sitting on the roof of the hut. When he saw us he raised a melancholy howl.

Maguire undid his puttees, took off his boots, waded in, and off he went. It was lunacy, and I could not help him. I could not help myself, after almost a day in that forest. The swimmer passed the hut and reached the canoe. He got in, cut its mooring rattan, and presently had the Chinaman off the roof and beside me.

The man sprawled at our feet, shivering and moaning. Maguire kicked him and loudly demanded to know why he had no food cooked. Had he been smoking opium all the time, to let the river rise like that? He could take his money and go. The Irishman pushed off again, called out that there was a rifle and map in the hut and he must get them. When he reached the miserable structure I saw that entrance to it was impossible; the water had almost reached the eaves of the thatch. But a figure in the last light of that day appeared on the ridge of the thatch and began hacking it desperately, casting the palm leaves into the stream; and presently it lowered itself through the hole it had made and disappeared within.

I watched for the silhouette of Maguire to reappear on the ridge of that precarious vantage in the waters. The Chinaman beside me continued to moan, and in frantic desperation I could have kicked him myself. It grew darker. The hut suddenly went oblique and continued slowly to decrease. Maguire's head appeared above it like a black chimney pot. He began to chant aloud his ribald song. Then the flimsy structure flattened on the water, flattened and spread, with the Irishman in the midst of the vague rubbish, and hurried downstream, missed a headland of trees, tossed in the waves of a cataract, and all I could see of it went on and vanished at a place where some giant bamboos were stretching and rocking on the flood like slender rushes.

CHAPTER XXIII

July 12.—We are at Amurang, a village on the northwest coast of Celebes. It is only a line of palms and huts under the hills, but it serves to remind us that the world is inhabited. Our siren blared, and we waited for Amurang to bring to us its wealth. There is a huddle of dugout canoes with double outriggers by our side, most of them peddlers with fish and fruit for our native passengers. We idle and watch this invasion of spacious emptiness by a little happy life.

There were added some interesting figures to our saloon company at Macassar, and my position at table has again changed. Now I am sentenced to the bottom; but I have been at the top, and the last change assures me that the Dutch officers have accepted me as one of the ship's company. Opposite to me now is a fragile young lady in white muslin with a pink sash. She is, I am told, a native of Minahasa, with no European admixture. Her crown of black hair dwindles her pale face, which is flattened, like the Malay, though it has no more color than would be cast by a soft, transparent shadow. Her lips are full and purplish, her nose broad, and her large eyes, widely separated, are as apprehensive and limpid as a deer's. The chief officer tells me that a century ago her people were cannibals. She compares in graciousness and refinement most favorably with the best Europeans, and her occasional embarrassment dur-

ing dinner when yet another hearty Dutch mess of pottage appears at her elbow is very funny, and a pleasant comment on our civilized habits. I like the way she recoils from a dish of oily meat. One would as soon offer it to a butterfly. She speaks French, as well as Malay and Dutch; but I do not intend to expose my Parisian accent to the regard of a daughter of cannibals, for I know what it would look like. I have not spoken to her; and to-day she left us. The farewells here are no concern of mine, so I do not stand at the gangway. To my agreeable surprise, the Minahasa nymph, who had never looked at me, floated across the deck to bid God-speed to the torpid and solitary Englishman, offering me a tiny hand in a way that would have honored a king. We need not stand in awe, perhaps, of the gap in time between a savage and the daughter of a hundred earls. And there is with us now another native lady, not quite the same, but I hear she is most deplorably rich. This must be so because her ears are weighted with diamonds as large as bottle stoppers; and she wears more rings than I should have thought the fingers of two hands could accommodate. She is middle-aged, haughty, and coffee-colored, and her elaborate European dress of silk gives her massive figure the shapeless bulk of a costumed elephant. Her bare brown arms with their freckles, like indelible stains, are heavier still with gold bangles. She was announced as Miss Evans, but she does not speak Cymry. What would not one give to learn her family history? What Welsh pirate—they were so often and so successfully Welsh—who retired to Java long ago for reasons

that were sufficient, enriched her people by linking them to the men of Harlech?

July 13.—This virgin coast of Celebes, which again since Amurang has appeared to be a ghostly conjuration near us, yet not to be verified, has suddenly become solid, humane, and close, and is called Menado. This is the chief port of Minahasa, the northeastern limb of Celebes, and Menado lightly sustains the beautiful name of its province. There is nothing so good on the coast of Java. Mountains surround Menado's noble bay; and beyond the business quarters of the town, which of course are no better than commerce usually makes of its quarters, the broad roads, shaded by kanary and cassia trees, are bordered by shrubberies in which villas, mostly of timber in the native style, float hull deep in a tumble of leaves and flowers.

It is politic to get lost when you are ashore at a place for the first time, and it was not long before I had to disentangle myself from a native village in which I fancied I was invading screened affairs. Then I found myself lonely on a steep bank of black sand, where in places trees overshadowed the sea. Along the foreshore was a tide line of sea litter, husks of cocoanuts, carapaces of crabs, dried sea-urchins, strayed timbers, and a fragment of a ship's board on which were the last two letters of her name. A drove of lean and grizzled swine were nosing there. A few catamarans were made fast above the tide to volcanic bowlders. Only the smell of decaying sea wrack was familiar on that beach. While I was sitting on the gunwale of a dugout canoe, over which was a dark canopy of leaves, assured that I could hear nothing of Charing Cross, and wondering why I

had not remembered earlier that such beaches may be found if one is both willful and lucky, a voice asked me whether Celebes pleased me. That figure in white had come down behind me unannounced by sand that was as dark and noiseless as midnight. He was a Dutch official, and he had seen London in my hat. (That hat!) Did I know Lake Tondano? No, but I had heard of it. Then would I honor him by going thither in his car? The Dutch are friendly souls, though not often so informal and enterprising as that. I assured him that I would convey my warm approval of Holland to Whitehall.

The rest of Celebes may be waiting for its explorers, yet soon it was clear that Minahasa is not only comely even in Indonesia, but that it would be remarkable among earth's showiest attractions. Our car mounted, was besieged by flamboyant foliage, was released to vast prospects where a misty lower brightness that was the sea invaded a far vague plain inclosed by mountains; there were dark islands in the sea. We passed through forests to the shrilling of cicadas. When we rose to the coolness of the plateau of Tondano the villages suggested that they had been designed to excite the wonder of strangers. The houses were in the style of the Malay hut, but were larger and were built of solid timber on stone foundations. There was evidence everywhere that the folk here were refined and gentle. Along the ledge of every veranda were porcelain flower pots—not vile petrol tins, as everywhere else in the East, which make even orchids look like molting birds of paradise in cheap cages. Roses, dahlias, sunflowers, and crotons with colored and variegated foliage were neatly dis-

played under plantations of areca and sugar palms, and the plantains. The cattle resembled the deer-like creatures of the Channel Islands at home. The plain about the great lake was planted with rice and maize. In one hamlet, where the Protestant church was a surprise with its air of placid content and irrevocable decision, the brown nippers were just coming out of school. No procession of young virgins taking the Hampstead air under the eye of a mistress who would stand no nonsense could have improved on the sedate superiority of those girls of Minahasa, bareheaded, barefooted, in white muslin, with prodigious plaited tails of black hair tied with black bows. They carried books in their hands, and they seemed well aware that they were of the best people and must walk home in just that way. They did not look at us, but talked to one another discreetly, and my own feeling certainly was that I belonged to a cheaper suburb.

My Dutch companion noticed my astonishment and chuckled. I learned that no more than a century ago this part of Celebes was inhabited by savages who lived in village communities placed higher on stilts than usual, for they desired to have a chance, if surprised by head-hunters. And all of them were collectors of heads. It was a local pastime, for as they did no work, they had to amuse themselves somehow. Each village had its own dialect, and cannibalism was then a righteous act, conferring virtue and turning men into heroes, as warfare does to-day. The Dutch, who followed the Portuguese into northern Celebes, woke after a hundred years of sleep to the fact that the natives of this part of Celebes were rather different from the other islanders;

that they were more active, more intelligent, more comely, and that they were not, by comparison, uncleanly in their ways. So encouraged, the Dutch presented these savages with a few coffee beans and some instruction. To grow coffee it was necessary for the head-hunters to descend from their stilted homes; and to sell the crop in Tondano meant the making of roads. With their homes on the ground, and easy paths between the hostile villages, the hunting of heads became much too serious for a pastime, and it was given up. The present village of Tondano would be an ornament in a petted baronial estate in Sussex, but originally it was built on piles in the great lake. The Dutch officials, however, preferred to meet these people where you were not likely to drop through the floor into deep water just when you were getting the better of an argument with some fine fellows dressed in a few shells. They persuaded the villagers of the propriety of rebuilding Tondano some miles away from the unhealthy lake. And that was where I found it, with its children leaving their schoolhouse and carrying their books with such conscious grace. Why is it we are told with even furious emphasis that it is impossible to alter human nature? Is that emphasis really a symptom of fear? Do our brigadiers really worry because they dread that they may be cured of head-hunting? Do our social parasites secretly fear that they may be cured of greed?

July 14.—At sunset we passed through the Sangi Islands, eyries for the pirates of Sulu a few years ago. Our course is east; we have entered the Molucca Passage. I remained on deck, kept there by a mere name. After Magellan died in the Philippines the survivors of that

most remarkable of voyages came south to the Moluccas, the "Islands of the Kings," and sheltered at Ternate. Ternate is a word, as Milton knew, like Samarkand and Cathay. To the Elizabethan it meant the splendor at the world's end and the most a sailor could do. At midnight I had the deck to myself, and there I stayed till daylight. The bo'sun-birds, which are said to be the restless souls of dead mariners, mourned around us in the dark. Now and then one of them would pass like a wraith through the beam of light in our foretop. The unseen surge chanted quietly of what men had done and of what men had forgotten. Our ship, I began to feel, was at the end of time, was at the verge of all the seas, and she herself was but the shadow of a memory drifting under strange stars in a quest for what man will never find again.

CHAPTER XXIV

One day the chief engineer of the *Savoe* was feeding his parrots. He has a noisy display of them on the boat deck. When I spoke to him he turned on me abruptly and peered intently at my face for a clew, perhaps, to what he thought was an English joke. "You cannot stay at Ternate," he said, doubtfully. I explained that this was easy. One merely left the ship and did not return. It was not possible, the chief replied. And then I learned that the island might vanish at any moment. It was only a volcano. And while it remained above the sea I should be without electric light, intellectual resources, gin, himself, and news of the world. There was nothing at Ternate but barbarians and nether fires. I told him that barbarians would be a nice change and that I had a morbid interest in the infernal.

"All right," he said, bitterly, "when we find you again you will 'ave fezzers in your 'air." He pantomimed with his fingers, to represent quills upright on his brow. He turned to his parrots and refused to converse any more with an ungrateful fool.

But how could anyone approach the Spice Islands at sunrise and not wish to call that his journey's end? Leave the ship and possibly the world? If Ternate was not the place for which I had been looking, then it was the phantom of it; and in any case it was my duty to stay, if only to dispel an illusion, and then return to

become a cenobite who had proved this alluring world to be a dream from which nothing should be expected. We stood toward Gilolo, as it is named on the English maps, though it should be called Halmaheira. That greater and more distant island of the Moluccas was only a definite shadow of lilac. Behind it were monstrous billows of vapor that could have rolled from a fire which had been immense, but was extinct. The volumes of smoke, and that sea of tarnished silver, had been stilled. Nothing had moved there since the last of the old navigators sailed westward. Close to us soared the two imperative heads of Ternate and Tidore. Whether the fires of Ternate were alight, or whether the dawn had merely kindled a cloud at its summit, it was hard to say. Some native craft were about, but I thought they were abandoned, for they did not move, but remained in one place between sea and sky, held fast by their reflections, perhaps.

We passed the small island of Hiera, a rounded lump of forest, and drew abeam of Ternate. At first it seemed merely the perfect and typical cone of a volcano, but soon its summit was seen as a more irregular and complex crater, with embrasures, and the northern side of it reddish with precipitous ash. An old lava flow wound down in black hummocks through the verdure and ran into the sea. Ternate, excepting along its narrow selvedge of plantations, seemed more a place for birds than for men. Its high inclined upper forest was recessed into many dark ravines. Its bare head was in an upper light beyond the attainment of man. Some smoke was constant there, and, we imagined, some reflections; but all was so remote that fancy could do much as it liked

with the summit of Ternate, which was not quite of this world. We opened the village, and came alongside a jetty in deep water, where the bottom could be seen in the way we should see fields if the air was a tinted and pulsing lens. I stood on the old planks of that jetty, with the lucky barbaric figures about me—Malays, of course, but these men were more inclined to laughter and energetic talk than the natives to the westward. The hair of some of them was waved, and there were even a few frizzy mops; New Guinea is next door to Ternate.

Between the planks I could see the tide under our feet, but if a swarm of fish had not passed below like blue arrows and like globes of yellow light, the water would not have been there. Crimson lories were perched on the rail of the jetty and on the shoulders of the barbarians. There was an unusual liveliness and sparkle in the air. I knew perfectly well my ship would have to leave without me.

In a lane out of the village, which led up the first slope of the mountain, I found the *pasangrahan*, or rest-house, in a shrubbery of hibiscus. A Malay lady called her boys, and they showed me to a large cool room, and behaved as though they expected and hoped that I should never leave them again. I sat in the shade of a veranda, looked out at some cocoanut palms overhanging our garden in a blaze of still light, and lit a pipe. My steamer's siren abruptly warned her loiterers. She was off.

I struck another match. Some one laughed in the next garden. What else would anyone do in a place which appeared to be all gardens in peace in the glow of no ordinary day? Then my ship gave her salute of

farewell. Water would be between her and the jetty. I was marooned.

What is luck when we find it? It depends on ourselves, I suppose. It is only a way of looking at things. Luck is not there if we cannot see it; and even if we have no doubt that at last we are looking at it, our exclamation of pleasure, should we be indiscreet enough to make it, may only prove to our saddened friends that we are in reality no wiser than their privy guess.

It was long past noon, and by the look of the rest-house, and the empty lane beyond the garden, and the prospect of the slope of the mountain, Ternate was abandoned. There was not a sound. Nothing moved; not a bird, not a frond. The fronds might have been of enameled metal. Perhaps everybody had departed in the steamer and the island was mine. I felt, as did Robinson Crusoe, that I must go out and make an inventory of my fortune. The lane led up toward the impending declivity, but as though that ascent were far too steep it turned lazily northward among the easy groves parallel to the beach. There were many smells. One had to stop and try them again. Once it was frangipani, and once it was vanilla, and once it was cloves. There was a somber plantation of small and unfamiliar trees. They had glossy leaves and a fruit like green plums; but their fragrance, which was only a faint and occasional air, was familiar. My memory was slow, and I wondered why it was I knew the smell of trees I had never seen before. On one tree a number of the green plums had opened at the bottom, and disclosed within each was a heart overlain with a scarlet filigree.

In that twilight the opened fruit were as bright as glow lamps. What are the Spice Islands for but nutmegs?

The great breadfruit tree with its extravagant leaves, the slight and delicate areca palm under the crowns of stalwart cocoanuts, and the translucent emerald pennants of the plantain, may all some day get the verses they demand. But not here. When I looked at them that afternoon I felt in the mood for singing them, yet singing is another matter. To feel impelled to sing in praise, though that is a mind commendable in a man, may result in notes having but slight harmonic relevance to the genius of the impulse, a sad truth which poets often regret to observe is known to their critics. Sometimes I saw a house, looking in its frailty within an arbor but the afterthought of a lotus-eater who wanted a thatch for his sleeping-mat; a ladder led from the ground to its door, which was open to show that only dark silence inhabited it. The trees gave the lane a kind of greenish dusk. There was no sea and the mountain was invisible. Occasionally the path crossed the dried bed of a torrent, and by the water-worn bowlders of such a miniature ravine I turned off through a plantation of palms to find the sea. By the look of it that grove was eternal. It had no end. The gray aisles of inclined trunks gave only an illusion of space. I could not surprise the columns into granting any deep vista. They closed round me as I passed, though I did not see them move and could not hear them. But suddenly they opened, and left me in the sun on a beach of black sand.

Even the sea was asleep in the heat. It was only breathing. There across the water of a narrow strait

soared the peak and forests of the neighboring isle of Tidore. Tidore's sharp crater reached as high as a white cloud. I stood in an effort to understand this apparition. But what could mortal man make of it? Besides, it was all as surprising as that brief but unexpected revelation of the earth's virtue which shines at times just before the sun goes. But this brightness of the Moluccas did not fade, though I watched it for I forget how long. Tidore remained, a wall of forest diminishing to the sky, seemingly true and close to me, but with that denying strip of sea between us. As for my own island, there were the cocoanuts behind me, and one melancholy bird calling in them. The beach on one hand disappeared among some mangroves, which were wading in the sea. On the other hand, beyond a spit, was a canoe with a stem like the neck of a swan, a frail black shape on a shining tide, and in it the naked moving figures of three fishermen appeared legendary. I attempted to reach the little cape, to look round the corner, but a swamp turned me inland again and brought me to an impassable region of mangroves, an aqueous wood holding only shadows, where grisly stems projected from the sludge like the elbows and knees of the drowned. The mud of a near pool erupted into life and a crocodile raised its head to regard me. Moreover, night was not far off.

It was comforting to find the lane again, where now the islanders were strolling leisurely home. The women balanced pots on their heads, the men carried fish. Lights began to appear in the shacks. At supper that night perhaps I might have eaten less *daging babi* if the Dutch missionary who occupied the rest-house with

me had not displayed so speculative a mind in philosophy and had not indulged me with stories of neighboring islands which would have been improbable from any man but a scholarly missionary. Roast pig, however, when it is eaten late and thoughtlessly with philosophy, metaphysics, and anthropology, is a revengeful beast, and I woke with a sweating sense of a calamity that approached. What was it? Where was it? I could not see even the mosquito curtains, and my electric torch proved false. I listened for whatever was coming.

Nothing came; but my bed, which appeared to have the same dread as myself, trembled on its own account. I supposed then that the missionary might be walking heavily in the next room.

CHAPTER XXV

In the early morning, which did not come too soon, I found the missionary out by the beach. He told me my bed had been frightened because the island itself had moved. Indeed, some nervous people left their beds long before sunrise to watch flames at the crater. The missionary threw up his chin to look at the summit. That was as peaceful then as a chalk down. He suggested that trouble was coming. There were signs, he said, that the present outlines of sea and land about there were disapproved by whatever artist was surveying them. The resolve was accumulating for a more comfortable adjustment, and some folk, living somewhere about the line of volcanoes running through Sumatra, Java, the Sundas, the Moluccas, the Philippines, and up to Japan, would presently know that they had to pay for the relaying of the earth's floor thereabouts.[1] This missionary, himself resigned to the will of God, had seen it happen in the past, but he complained that he would prefer not to be a witness if our basement were withdrawn suddenly because another place required it as a first floor. Just off the pier on which we stood a Malay in a canoe was straining at a cast net so full of a sort of little herring that it seemed to be as heavy as a load of silver.

[1] Not till I returned to Singapore did I learn that it was Japan which had to pay.

After breakfast, as rain threatened, my Christian friend presented me, as an unexpected treat, with a various donation of the kind of magazine which is currently popular in England. He told me that he is in the habit of sharpening his knowledge of English upon them. I glanced at them, but wondered what he could mean. I had thought his knowledge of our language was different from magazine English, which it would be unfair to teach to Papuans. There was nothing else to do, so I toiled steadily, as a sort of propitiatory penance for my leisure on a tropical beach, through number after number, in a fatuous effort to discover why and how they were made. What first drew me to this quest was the discovery that quite a number of the stories oddly concerned the South Seas and the Malay Islands. For some reason well known to the wholesale milliners who trimmed those pages the Orient and the South Seas are the decorations favored by those who enjoy popular magazines. On the whole, perhaps a Malay or a Solomon Islander, when imagining the marvels of London and Manchester for the wonder of his neighbors, might conceive something stranger than those English yarns about the oceanic dots of the tropics; yet it is proper for us to bear in mind that at home we are supposed to be not as unaware as Solomon Islanders. We ought to know more about them than they know about us. And, anyhow, there is no escape from the fact that English is our language, and that we ought to use it to better purpose than do the less fortunate their feathers, shells, and glass beads. There can be no excuse for our untutored abandon with the words which once were ordered into "Macbeth" and "Endymion." When we see our

fellows, nearly five hundred years after their renaissance, when Athens and Rome and a New World together called them out of darkness into light, using today their heritage as though it were no better than the wash in which may be floated the delectable oddments for the trough, then it is certain that Malay fishermen, chanting traditional songs at their paddles, know better what to do with their life and letters. In one magazine an Englishwoman wrote about a ship as though the English had never seen a ship since the *Mary Rose* foundered; a Papuan, before he had got over his excitement, and before fully recovering his speech, might make the same display over an airplane. In another magazine there was a tale of Borneo. Its writer was moved to describe for us the forest of that great island, and from him I learned that "the aged and unprofitable jungle monarchs—like elderly bigoted ministers of a past decade—must give way to the eternal advances of the younger generation. Henceforth there would be no shackling, clogging weeds, no more overcrowding, nothing but clear-cut, regularly planted yielders of latex." True, we know that kind of writing is always possible, and comes up anywhere when the ground is neglected among the brickbats and the old meat tins on the outer marches of our culture. What is original about it now is that we should display it for sale, as though it were a gardener's triumph. And how well it symbolizes the happy mind of the civilized man as he contemplates in confidence the superiority of his state! He has never seen the forest of Borneo; but he does know the beauty of motor tires. He has never seen the dismal rows of mean Para rubber trees, exiled and regimented, and does

not know that a close and long association with such a plantation would be excuse enough for an outburst of crime on the part of a gentle and sensitive gorilla. He recognizes motor tires at a glance, but he has never stood alone in the silence of the Bornean forest, and so is unaware that in kanary and gum-dammar trees there is a somber and Gothic majesty which man has never attained except in those cathedrals he has now forgotten how to build, and that about the capitals and pediments of those columns a wealth of ferns and epiphytes is so airily poised and startling in that spectral light that a watcher is inclined to wonder whether he should trespass further. Unprofitable and clogging weeds! No wonder we have forgotten how to build cathedrals and to compose symphonies when rubber plantations are taken to symbolize the conquest of mind over matter! Is modern man degenerating into a noisy and destructive urchin who will use the whole planet as once the Vandals did Rome? Certainly his behavior is becoming alarming, and his confident guffaws under the eternal stars must warn them that life below has taken another awkward turn. Yet it is idle to complain. Science has put the tools into his hands which he for himself could never have discovered, and it looks as though he will maim himself and all else with them, unless some one brings a light and a mirror before it is too late, and persuades him to take a long and steady look at himself.

I crept into the room of my benefactor, the missionary, and left with him the incubus of that printed matter. It was sufficient to sink the Moluccas. It would justify any earthquake. I wanted it to be where I should not be reminded of what it represented, and departed to the

evening beach to forget it. The rain had cleared. The sky was ready for the sunset. The Malay women, in colors which would make Monte Carlo seem like an outing of Calvinists, were gossiping in the streets of the village. The Chinese shopkeepers sat by their doors, smoking and watching their children at play. The fishermen were on the beach, slowly making fast their boats. There was a smell of drying sea-pulse, but no head-hunters and no noticeable murderers; and I was the deplorable and only representative of the whole tribe of beach-combers. The sea, that deceptive sea of tide-rips and reefs, was as radiant and benign as though it had confessed its sins, and peace was now in its ancient heart and not sharks. Gilolo and Tidore were built of lapis-lazuli, but Ternate was of olivine, and about its head were clouds which, after various dyes, became bright gold after sunset, and reflected about us briefly the aura of a day we had lost. Lights appeared in the deeps of the shadow of earth, and stars in the sky. The beach of Ternate, at sunrise and sunset, changed thus every day. I never saw it repeat itself. Why should it, with all those colors? That light, and those islands, cleared the last doubt, the last stain of misgiving left by the memories of Europe, that our own star might be one now omitted from the regard of Heaven. It still had the full celestial benefit.

CHAPTER XXVI

I LEARNED one morning during my stay that the people of Ternate had been considering me, and had concluded that I must be there because I wanted pearls. Pearls were brought to me. Patient figures would squat for hours on the veranda, waiting for my return, and would then approach in disarming politeness with small packets on outspread palms. These contained globules of many shades, some of them attractive. But I was as well satisfied in looking at them as if I had possessed them. Could I have done more than admire them if I had bought the lot. My knowledge of Malay, however, is insufficient for me to convey to pearl merchants my oddities in æsthetics and the ethics of property, and so they left me, most reluctantly, and I believe under the impression that I am an extremely knowing purchaser of pearls, and one it is hard to deceive. Then the merchants of Ternate, finding that I had rejected their entire stock of pearls, tried me with some gems and stones of these volcanic islands which were more interesting than the pearls, but very poor relatives, nevertheless, of tourmaline, jacinth, rock crystal, peridot, and such. These failed. Then to my veranda came coins of the old Dutch East India Company, and even some ancient Portuguese silver, and two eighteenth-century Dutch glass tumblers. I held an audience with curios every morning after breakfast, and was startled once

to find in a packet containing shells two of Queen Victoria's sovereigns. The last time I saw sovereigns was in Paris in 1914, and then they were mine. I touched those relics reverently, to the great approval of their owner, who thought at last he had found me at home. In a week I supposed I had seen all Ternate's jewels and oddities outside the old palace of the last sultan (who is now safely sequestered in Java), but one morning a box was placed at my feet, and a cus-cus was released. I saw at once I did not require a cus-cus, but encouraged the keeper of it with money to let the little creature play about. No evidence could have assured me with greater certainty that I was nearly as far from Singapore as I was from home. That zoölogical freak belongs to a region sundered from Asia by an oceanic gulf nearly as profound as its age in time.

I enjoyed those morning audiences. My visitors were modest in all but the value they put upon their wares, and even that they estimated with such humble grace, and urged it so softly, and with such an engaging appeal from innocent eyes, and they were so attractively dressed, and took gratefully my refusal as though it were full acceptance, that I felt it would be easy to have them as neighbors for the rest of my life.

These people of Ternate might be explained by an ethnologist; yet if he did it nobody but other ethnologists would understand him, and probably they would deny all he said. The people of my island are, of course, of the Malay race. But what is that race? The Javanese of Jokyacarta and the Dyaks of Borneo are of the same race, though you would never guess it unless you were told. You could not be expected to guess it,

for early Hindu migrations to Java, and other causes, have reduced most of the resemblance to the brownness of skins. There is often something effeminate and timid about the look of a man of Java, but you would never forget to treat a Dyak with the courtesy due from one gentleman to another gentleman who happened to be well armed and to have a look of cool independence about him. Once I saw a European strike a Javanese, calmly, accurately, and with contumely, and then stride on slowly as though nothing had happened. If he had so behaved to a Dyak he would have become an unsightly object on the instant. There is certainly a Malay type, to be recognized throughout the islands. That Malay is less than most whites in stature, but his figure and bearing are attractive. His complexion varies a little, but it is usually bronze. His hair is straight and black, his smooth face is slightly flattened, and his high cheek bones diminish his chin and jaws to delicacy. His nose is small, with prominent nostrils, and his lips are boldly curved and full. He looks better with his mouth shut, for he chews betel and his teeth are black. His dark eyes are grave and watchful. His beauty, in fact, is not generally admired. But that is a matter of taste. I myself found it a pleasure to look upon him and his family, for it was clear that in spite of his apparent indolence he has solved the problem of existence more happily than his betters. He appears to enjoy every hour of the day, and to find very little to worry him. He is not eager to work; yet, why be eager for that, when the primal curse rests lightly? Some fishing and a little time in the padi field set him free to enjoy contemplation and gossip, both of

which he loves. But, for the fun of it, he will suffer any hardship in adventure. He is serious in converse and softly spoken. He does not like brusque and ardently curious people with loud voices. It is better, though, not to misread his gravity, for he is an observant man and his humor is dry. He does not meekly tolerate conduct which violates his own code of manners, for he has the mind of an aristocrat and assumes that his worth will not be questioned. I was told that he is quick to appraise the social standing of his visitors, but he always cleverly disguised whatever views he had about me. A carrier of my pack in the wilds, though there he allowed himself but the bare luxury of a cloth about his loins, would stand and converse with the simple dignity of a gentleman who had no illusions left. But he never complained. It might be late, our direction uncertain, our night's shelter unknown, and our food unfit for a good Mohammedan. But he would merely express a bare opinion, while disengaging with a big toe the leeches which clung to the other leg. Neither did he praise me. He would pick up his pack, the matter decided, in the manner of a man who could go on forever in good company, and there would not be another word from him. Yes, it would be easy and even pleasant to throw in one's lot with the Malays. A Malay hamlet is a much more attractive result of human effort, and it shelters a happier people, even though it is not far beyond the stage of the lake-dwellings of the Neolithics than Birmingham. Somewhere into our calculations at home for the enjoyment of what sunshine we are likely to get, a few

alien and sinister factors have crept, and have deflected our figures and poisoned our sum.

Where the Malays came from is still in dispute. They are bold seafarers, and words of their language are found, it is said, in Madagascar and Polynesia. It is now believed that there is an affinity between them and the Polynesians. But nobody who has seen a little of the Malay Archipelago could doubt that it is a vast region for the fusion of races as magnetic as is now the American continent. The playground of the schoolhouse of Ternate, where little girls chattered among cycads and hibiscus, has received marked contributions from China, Arabia, Papua, and Europe. A passing ethnologist, his glance over the shrubs alighting on some quaint and lively little cinnamon-tinted fairy in white, would want all his skill to tell him whether her demure nose and mouth were from the East or West, though her hair and eyes might be slyly of the Orient. Ternate, of course, though now it is forgotten, and though it was never any more extensive than its present six miles by eight, was for centuries as attractive as a perfumed gem in these seas. Have you read the eulogy of it in *The World Circumnavigated by Sir Francis Drake?* It was not surprising, therefore, when looking into that school garden, to find reasons to admire the potency of Bagdad, Peking, Lisbon, the South Seas, and Amsterdam. The market place, too, if you were out early enough, was even better, though there the influences were less marked, for the Malay was dominant.

The market is held in a small maze of narrow alleys down by a corner of the beach. The fish is landed directly into it. Some of the alleys, those where the

women sit on the ground before their garden wares, are sheltered from the sun with white awnings. A group of Malay women, when dressed for everybody's eyes, make a finer display than any summer border in full bloom. Flowers, even masses of larkspur, roses, marigolds, peonies, and hollyhocks, could never equal that market place of Ternate, for flowers never turn their heads, and do not smile with such art. The women of Ternate sit in rows facing each other, and the pathway is carpeted between them with plantain leaves. The avenue under the awning is pellucid with filtered light, but patterns of glowing day fall through apertures to emphasize oranges, green and scarlet chillis, mangosteens, and egg fruit. Vagrant light glitters from moving combs and bracelets of gold, and on some vivid dresses is like a shout of triumph in the distance. These good people placidly accept their visitors. Their manners are perfect. One is at one's ease. A native of Gilolo who had brought over his tobacco in a canoe one morning, pulled out several copious handfuls, wrapped them deftly in a square of banana leaf, and for a few trivial coins gave me sufficient potent stuff to make all a hardened forecastle crowd wonder—after one pipeful each—whether smoking is not the worst of follies. And that man of Gilolo was another sort of Malay, with wavy hair; but then the Papuans in that market place with their huge frizzy mops, faces almost black, and open and constant smiles, showed, like the cus-cus, that Ternate is on the border line of another region, far from the Malay Peninsula.

My friend the missionary, who has spent most of his life among the islands, confused the ethnological prob-

lem still more that night with a story of one island he knows, which I should like to see, but never shall. It was not far from me then, and yet more difficult of access than Spitzbergen is from Edinburgh. He called it Makisar. It is to the south of the Moluccas, an isolated lump in the direction of Australia. The Dutch sent a garrison of a hundred of their countrymen and their wives to Makisar some time in the seventeenth century, built a stockade for them, left them, and forgot them. There the descendants of the garrison are to-day, still in the stockade. To that island, about that time or somewhat later, came some English folk named Francis and Coffin, and a Dutch family named Joosten from Macassar. They, too, went into the stockade, which had no traffic with the islanders. The stockaded part of Makisar to-day is peopled with men and women with light eyes and skins and fair hair, who are European in appearance, but who have no word of Dutch or English, though their names are out of the Church registers of the West of England and Holland.

CHAPTER XXVII

July 16.—The Jalan Pantai, or the seashore road, of Ternate, has an affinity with that prelude to the day when the risen sun has still to surmount the high land of Halmaheira across the sea; or so you think till you are sauntering there when the sun has fallen behind the volcano at the back of you. The truth is, that path is so responsive to light that morning is there before its hour, and day remains when the sun has gone. This morning the path by the beach was as elated as though with good tidings which a stranger like myself could not be expected to understand. I did not know the reason for its joy, but I could share it. It was high water. The sea itself could have been the dawn. A sailing canoe, with prow and stern so shaped that the craft was like a black swan with a head at each end of its long body, was flying in the brightness between us and that land which lay athwart the east. Tamarinds and other trees made a dark roof to the path, but the light came low and level through their colonnade. One tree had strewn the road with white corollas, the size of goblets, and their stamens were long tassels of white silk tipped with pink. Careless bounty! By the jetty was a stall for the fishermen, with coffee, fried cakes of fish, pineapples, and mangosteens; some cockatoos and lories sat on the branch of a tamarind beside it. The high peak of Tidore was the first to see the sun, and

signaled the news to us from a cloud. From the end of the pier I thought I could see through the water even to the little stones lying on the sea floor in five fathoms. Corals and sea-growths were darkly grouped about the greenish pallor of tracks in that garden. The coral was tall and branched, or was in rounded beds. Its shapes wavered and pulsed in the unseen movements of the crystal. It dilated and diminished in areas of olive green, orange, crimson, and gray. It appeared to be not much below the surface of the glass, but bonitos like torpedoes of blue light glanced over it in midspace and changed the illusion, and other fish, like oscillating silver coins, like tinted glow lamps intermittently charged, like swooping black and yellow butterflies, like the petals of flowers quivering in a zephyr, deepened and extended the sight. Their vivid forms would appear suddenly where there had been nothing, and then, like apparitions, become absorbed in their element. The heat of the day, which had come, was unnoticed.

July 17.—The surgeon of the garrison took me over with him to Tidore in his motor-launch. He had some cases of yaws and dysentery to attend to there. I was reminded that this paradise, in spite of its shining aspect, is only one degree north of the line. Tidore once was the rival sultanate to Ternate's; both little islands, in their day, competed for the rule over many greater neighboring islands, though I believe that Ternate was in the end the more successful. Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, and English intrigues in turn encouraged those natives' claims which promised most profit at the time to civilized impartiality. About the east side of Ternate there are several decaying forts, and many derelict

cannon, of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The more cut-purse maxims of a hustling commercial college probably are but transcriptions of the mottoes on the cannon butts of those lively traders of the past who wanted spice, and invoked the aid of God's blessed gunpowder to get it.

As we neared Tidore the islands and coasts changed their outlines, and Ternate disappeared, for the village of Tidore is on the east side of its island. There were the usual beaches of black sand of a volcanic island, and the shore was littered with bowlders of weathered lava. From the landing place a spacious white terrace, with an occasional cannon by its balustrade, rose as though to a palace secret in the foliage above. We had that terrace to ourselves, however, a fact which seemed queer to me, and mounted it till we came to mounds of grass and shrubs and half-hidden walls. The palace has been overthrown. In that high sunny place there was no sultan, but only a silent sprite of a bird, which moved about the tangle of vines, watching us, as though wondering what men could want there. The village by the shore is almost derelict, and the esplanade, so remarkably broad with its white walls resplendent at noon, and the palm fronds above it, is but a memory of an importance almost hidden now under grass. Not even Dutch ships visit Tidore to-day. There are stone houses, and radiant white arches and pillars framed in creepers, and other hints of Spain when Spanish adventurers had no doubt all the seas were theirs. But Tidore on my day was abandoned to a brilliant light; we arrived after it had lost its interest and was beyond the verge of a living world.

July 19.—The padre showed me some graves of English seamen in the cemetery to-day, but their stones were illegible. The Chinese cemetery is next door, with its curious quarter-moon tombs on rising ground, and that, too, of the Malays, where the little gravestones are overgrown with shrubs. But I had discovered these places early in my stay on the island. The frangipani, which in the Malay islands is the "grave flower," is freely planted, and so many other shrubs are in bloom that this little corner of island is a good hunting ground for insects; and, of course, it is not frequented by the natives. I may loiter there unobserved. The Chinese and the Malay burial places show that these people somehow have resolved the fact of death into their view of the earth, and they make no fuss about it. They don't invite it, but when it comes they take it quietly, and their graves are as if they had no doubt the dead know best what to do with themselves. But the Christian cemetery is a loud and desperate effort to deny the fact. One curious structure there incloses the grave of a man named Laurens. It has a roof and an upper story. By the tomb is a map of Palestine and a series of biblical pictures. The walls of the inclosure are decorated with a host of framed texts, mainly of promises to the righteous, as though Laurens was prepared against the Last Day, and was ready to present God with a bundle of I O U's. Surmounting the texts is the crest of a cavalry regiment, and so many other symbolical figures are scattered about that on the Resurrection Day Laurens should have no difficulty in establishing his merits, even if the entries made by the Recording Angel are inadequate. And so that Laurens

shall make no simple but disastrous mistake when he gets up, a hand is stenciled where he will see it at once, with its dexter finger pointing to the sky.

The padre has spent most of his life among the islands east of Borneo and Java, but appears to be doubtful that he has saved many souls, so I did not pursue like a mean actuary the tender subject of missionary enterprise. He thought that missionaries merely imposed a form upon what remained essentially the same thing. The islanders still believe, when matters are urgent, whether they go to the church or the mosque, that the spirits are more potent than the prophets. If they go through the form of Christian marriage it is only to propitiate another doubtful element. They marry still by the process of *lari-bini*, to run with a wife; or of *kawin-minta*, to buy a wife. In the first there is a pretense of taking a girl by force from unwilling parents, and then a formal forgiveness and a payment. Or the consent of the parents is at once given and the price is paid. They may come to the missionary after that, to make things right all round. In the Kei Islands a marriage contract is made on a piece of wood, on which symbols may show that the bridegroom owes four gongs, two guns, and three drums, for the girl. He then enters the home of his wife's parents and serves until the credit marks on the marriage contract correspond with the symbols on the other side of the stick. The padre told me that recently he baptized the black children of an Englishwoman who lives on Halmaheira. But these mysterious "English," whenever I have come across an example, might be Arabs or Tamils just as easily. And they always speak a Port Said variety of cockney, when

they know the language at all. Their names, however, are solidly British.

July 24.—Crossed over to Halmaheira to-day, and landed at the village of Gilolo, at its northwest corner. This extensive island appears to be covered with forest from the water line to the mountain tops. It is still unexplored and almost uninhabited. We landed by a mangrove swamp. The tide was out, and as it will take more than one day to explore so much mountainous jungle, I sat on a stump and watched the surface of the glistening mud. It was riddled with the burrows of little crabs. Some were vermilion, others were white, and one sort was violet with legs of pale blue. They seemed to have had disturbing news; perhaps it was an election, perhaps the Gilolo exchange had fallen, but that flat of mud was a scene of hysterical activity. Each alert crab, whatever his color, was a morsel of irrepressible curiosity and could not keep indoors, but must hear all the news, and so sat at the mouth of his burrow, or crept away from it to eavesdrop on his neighbors. He moved with an air of such studied and circumventing cunning that he might have been the secret agent of an embassy or a trust; but at the first haughty gesture of a neighbor's claw—now then, none of that; keep away there, quite far off, please—fear shot him home. When our little motor-boat was returning to Ternate, a run of six hours, we got caught in opposing tide-rips and currents that had heaped in the intricate channels of the islands, and occasionally I wondered whether her engine would stand it. We gyrated at times in a light-headed and sickening way, and the Malay who steered

us (good man!) had all he could do to keep us from being swamped. It was a relief to get under the shelter of Ternate, where we picked up an abandoned sailing *prahu* and took her in tow.

CHAPTER XXVIII

But for the durian, the spell of Ternate might not have been broken. I should have lost count of days and nights. I might have imagined that I had been cast upon a place beyond time and storms and was living on another plane. There is much to be said for the lotus. It is a benign gift. What happens when we neglect it is seen in the anxious and haggard aspect of morally superior communities. But the durian is different. I did not know that, however, when I mentioned it to my companion, the padre, as a famous Malay fruit I had not experienced. Nor did his answer forewarn me. He became alert and eager at once. He confessed he was greedy when he saw a durian. He said grandly that it was the king of fruits. Other men, I remembered, have been as extravagant over the durian. What is it Russel Wallace told us? "Its consistence and flavor are indescribable. A rich butter-like custard highly flavored with almonds gives the best general idea of it, but intermingled with it come wafts of flavor that call to mind cream-cheese, onion sauce, brown sherry, and other incongruities . . . rich . . . glutinous . . . perfect . . . a new sensation, worth a voyage to the East to experience."

What a fruit! The padre assured me most earnestly that he would get me a durian. I must eat one, and my soul would be made gracious. However, he must

have forgotten it. No durian came. Then late one afternoon I returned from an attempt upon the mountain, and was light-hearted after losing myself in a forest above the clouds which refused to let me pass. I had seen crimson lories flying in solitude like pigeons. A great bird-winged butterfly, one of the gold-and-emerald *ornithoptera* which till that day had never been more than a colored flash in the distance, that afternoon paused overhead, planed down to a flower which was near my face, and pulsed its vivid body so near that I could see the quivering of its antennæ. We may call mind the aim of life, if that flatters us, but the tense life which vibrated that superb creature evidently was obeying a command which we have never heard. No sooner had it gone than a swallow-tail even larger, a very folio butterfly in black, crimson, and primrose, alighted on the same white trumpet, weighted down the pendulous and swinging flower, and danced to its movements. Overhead an eagle was poised, surveying the mountain seaward. He knew I was watching him. His bright eye kept meeting mine severely. The sea was even more remote below us than some of the clouds. I got back to the veranda of the rest-house, tired but pleased, and was going to my door, but stopped. . . . What was that? I forgot the crimson lories. My memory had gone straight back to an old German dugout with its decaying horrors. I thought I must have been mistaken, but advanced cautiously. Nothing could be there, I told myself, that was like the trenches of the Flers line. Confidence returned; the suggestion had gone. Then the ghost passed me again, invisible, dreadful, and I clutched the table, looking round. At first I could

determine nothing, but presently on a wall bracket I saw resting a green and spinous object as large as a football, and tiptoed to smell it.

It was!

The padre appeared, but was not dismayed. Instead, he called a native with a knife to open the durian. The man performed this on the green porcupine most expertly from one end, disclosing soft and creamy contents. I tried to forget the smell, took a portion, and, as they used to say in France, went over the top in daylight. But I knew at once this was my last durian. Facing the foe, I fell. That indelicate odor, and the flavor of a sherry custard into which garlic had been slipped, overshadowed Ternate for some hours afterward. The smell shamelessly wandered about, and the taste of the garlic remained after the sherry was forgotten. Only sleep interposed to stop my bewilderment over what Russel Wallace could have meant by it.

And in the morning there was something else to think about. With the Assistant Resident, a young Dutchman who talked like a boy from an English public school because that indeed was what he was, I was to attempt the crater of the volcano. It was two hours before dawn. Sirius was blazing over Gilolo. We wished to be well up the slope before the sun was there. But our two Malay porters had another opinion about the need for an early start, and Sirius was paling into a sky of rose and madder before we got away. Our men, father and son, were not so interested in that mountain as the other two in the party. The father was the guide, and carried a *parang*, a bright Malay weapon of such weight and balance that it is good for either agriculture or

homicide. Not one of our party knew the mountain above the upper forest, and only the guide and myself had been as far as the forest; for Ternate, even official Ternate, though its interest in its crater is acute, yet is satisfied with a distant prospect from the beach. This oceanic volcano is 5,200 feet high at present, and in the sun which is usual to the island the summit may be said to look out of sight. Why go? One need not.

But if one goes, the beginning is made in elation. The gardens of spices and the cocoanut groves are traversed with ease. The gardens are cool and scented. The ascent is gradual. You feel that such a journey could be continued forever and that any material refreshment would profane it. But suddenly and brusquely the slope is not gradual. It is quite otherwise. For a few minutes, while a fierce light beats upon you—no more nutmeg trees—and the ground is rough which rises within a foot or so of the nose, you suppose that this interlude is only a playful gesture by the mountain. It wishes to test your devotion. In this it succeeds. When you pause, the thumping of the heart is like the pulse of the silence. The perspiration drips from the fingers. You are surprised and a little dashed. Every mirthful thought has deserted and gone home. When the uplands are surveyed to see if they are any nearer, sweat runs into the eyes. And they are not any nearer. The slope is immediate, continuous, tractless, and tropical, and the summit has vanished behind that overhanging forest which has yet to be reached. This playful little gesture of the mountain seems to be its normal attitude, and requires some thought.

So our party discovered, this morning. With what

enterprise the Dutchman strode ahead, energetically kicking pebbles backward at me! He was as frolicsome as a goat. He leaped from root to root where they were tangled in the shady path like cables. I followed meekly, wondering how long I should last. I hoped his ebullience would be cooled presently. The sun came up; but we were still deep in the plantations. My companion appeared to have decided that the British should see what a little nation could do; and it had clearly dawned on me that, though my flag may have braved the battle and the breeze for a respectworthy period, I should disgrace it in a race to the crater against Holland.

While I was still valiantly holding out, determined to go on or drop dead on the track, I saw my friend stop, take off his helmet, and gaze into it reflectively. He did not move when I reached him. That was a good chance to show him the attractive character of the sugar canes growing beside us, their plumes surmounting staffs which were of chocolate circled regularly with thin bangles of gold. If one stood in a certain way, I assured him, the chocolate had a purplish bloom. But my friend wiped his face and gazed at me with an expression of abject pathos.

We turned aside, while recovering, to a small cluster of native huts. They were built on a narrow step of the slope, from which we looked out over treetops to the place where the village we had left was a smudge on a long serpentining coast. Under a thatch apart were several shrines to the spirits of the sea and land, and in one of them was a good model of a sailing canoe, beside which was placed a little rice to prosper somebody's voyage. But only the chickens were about; we saw no

spirits of the sea or land, and not even a solid husbandman.

The sun was now above the trees, apparently crystallizing the foliage into rigidity with its straight glare. We continued our upward toil. The sun was on our backs. Above a half acre of scratched earth, in which were hasty pineapples, tobacco, and cassava, the track vanished completely at a point where an earthquake had flattened three huts. That clearing was grown over with labiate herbs and a kind of raspberry. Above it the cliff of the forest regarded the huts and the advancing wayfarers with such impassive aloofness, as though man were a late and unimportant curiosity on the earth, that I myself thought it might be as well to erect a shrine to whatever hamadryads haunt tropical groves. But my Dutchman, though he affably agreed, did not appear to get more than a misty notion of the idea, so we continued the ascent.

Our guide disappeared in a canebrake. We stooped and followed him, and at last were crawling astern of the sound of the Malay's busy knife. This original progress began in amusement; at least it was a relief from the sun; but I could not help noticing, in about two minutes, that a spiky tunnel, in which the air is like steam, has its disadvantages. Then we had to stop and wait on our hands and knees, for we could not hear our guide. Suddenly his *parang* broke loose again somewhere on my left, and as suddenly ceased. The guide's face, after a long silence, pushed aside the stems near us—how native to the wilderness is a Malay's face when morosely it just peeps out of jungle grass!—and he told us he was lost. It had seemed to

me that it might be so, for his knife strokes had had a wild and erratic ring, as though the obstinate vegetation were being punished. We crawled back, therefore, in the reverse order, and the elegant young Dutchman reverted to his native language, as that, probably, was better equipped for expressing the results of the brittle but resistant nature of the herbage on the knees. The guide, though, was a good man. The world is wide, his manner led us to infer, and the day is young—why not get lost? He turned on the mountain again with a quiet energy altogether different from his early display. For the first time I began to suspect that we might reach the summit.

He went to the gigantic grass again, struck it with his knife, and thus sank into it. We stooped in slow pursuit of him; sometimes crawled, were whipped in the face by elastic stems, were stilettoed and bayoneted. I learned, being so near to the earth, why grains and spores turned at once into such a high tumult, for what was under my hands was warm and humid, and I should not have been surprised to feel it stir at my touch. We continued to move carefully on hands and knees, but, excepting that we were going up, I had no sense of our direction; only a tangle of dark ribbons could be seen overhead. Why was I enjoying it, as I withdrew another broken dagger from my trousers, wiped the sweat from my face on my sleeve, and looked at the blood on my hands? I don't know. Perhaps some of the energy which jetted upward in that mass of hard green fountains was charging me. The smell was strange, and it may have been the original smell of earth; we may have been close to a young and salutary

body. I had an idea that if I crawled long enough there I might overtake some lost time. It was while bravely continuing with this fortifying thought that we emerged, and found ourselves in an open space, with the jungle at hand. But before toiling up to attack that louring palisade we thought we ought to pause and recover uprightness, so we disposed our gear about us, reclined on a fallen tree, and contemplated the way we had come. The Malays crouched below us. They are very good at contemplation. They can maintain it, all day if necessary, without a movement. Our log was situated well on the way to the clouds. It might have been a seat on the edge of a darker cloud. The log was hot and dry, being nearer to the sun. I was idle-minded—I felt that I had been excused from what was necessarily occupying the attention of envious men, who were now a long way below me. The way we spent time here was no matter, because it was unlimited and unmeasured. The corrugations of the log were lanes and alleys for an industrious population of ants, and I watched them with the calm abstraction of an immortal who was far too great to understand the reason for so much activity and resolute enterprise that apparently got the tiny laborers nowhere, except into trouble now and then. But they appeared to like it. They did not know they were ants. With what industry and courage they carried particles up and over the ridges of the log, which were mountain ranges to them, determined to get their burdens somewhere, however high their mountains! They took no notice of the contemplating gods above them, and very little of the commotions and earthquakes the gods made on the log with idle

fingers. Probably that log was too immense for them to know, so how could they understand that it was only one log of a forest in a small island which, to the knowledge of the immortals, was insignificant among many islands of a vast globe? No doubt most of them got their particles safely home by evening. Success, success!

A little way down the incline, upright on the verge of space, were two areca palms, but far more distinguished and remarkable shapes than ever before I had seen those trees. They framed a far vision of Gilolo and cloudland. It was not easy to say at once which was island and which was vapor. But then, even the minor projecting sprays and fronds about us there seemed strangely posed and of more than the usual significance. The bee which alighted on a labiate flower at my feet was not related to anything I knew. I was invading his world, which seemed to have been warned of intruders and was curiously intent and quiet. Nothing moved there but the bee, and perhaps he had not yet heard news of the invasion. Immediately below the black figures of the areca palms the eastern coast of Ternate and the sea reminded me of the indentations of a chart on which the ocean was symbolized with the usual color. It was not easy to believe that our mountain top was based on anything more substantial than a tinted presentment of earth.

The Dutchman overcame the spell and the silence with a shout, and we rose to face the rest of the upward journey, which was only half done. A little climb brought us to the woods, and there we worked at first along the edge of a ravine the bottom of which was in night. We entered by a wilderness of bamboos, and the crackling

of the dry parchments of their spathes under our feet made an uproar which startled me, for it announced us to every dryad on the mountain. And there is no arguing with bamboo piping. If the pipes are stacked in any abundance in your way, then you must find a path round them or go back. The forest grew darker as we worked toward the head of the chasm. It was dank and elfish. The light was suspect. The shapes of the trunks and boughs were gnome-like. The way along the edge of the ravine was difficult with wreckage which looked like fallen trunks, but the shapes collapsed at a touch. They were only a treacherous semblance. The profusion and variety of the ferns, the queer tricks of parasitic growth—one decadent climber, its air roots no more than a spider-webbing, studded a tree with fleshy disks like green dollars—and an occasional view on the stem or the under side of a leaf of a shield-bug as brilliant as a black-and-scarlet flower, ought to have kept us from going farther, but the intelligent curiosity of adventurers always moves them on from what they see is good to what they know nothing about.

The slope often rose so steeply that the angle seemed unsafe for so heavy a load of forest. When we looked upward the trees might have been falling on us at a noiseless speed. We were always on the point of being overwhelmed. It was an act of faith when a projection was grasped for support, because you imagined the vast overhanging weight would at once begin to revolve with the extra burden. That sense of insecurity made the shock the greater when a bough gave way. But we did not fall far; the next tree below checked us and flung us against another tree, and that one threw us to the

ground. Luckily it was much cooler up there. A full view of the sky was infrequent, even when we looked back. When we looked down, during a pause to recover breath, instead of the contorted tentacles of aged roots ridden by fungi and moss reaching toward our faces and the columns leaning out of the shades, there was an upper show, in a light which was as fixed and greenish as a rare fluid that no wind could stir, of giant leaves even more fantastic than the succuba of roots; banners of wild plantain, pendent epiphytes, and the crowns of tree ferns which suggested, in that light, that we were lost in time and not in space, and had worked backward to the Mesozoic epoch.

From the beach of the island, looking toward the summit, above the forest one sees what appears to be grassland. It seems from below as smooth as the English South Downs. We got out of the forest at last into this very upper region, and found the grass. I had been looking forward to the experience of tramping over bare downs at such an elevation above a tropical sea. But that smooth grass was elephant stuff ten feet high, and for another half hour we could not see more than a yard about us. Then our way began to descend, so that when we crawled from the tunnel we had cut we were in a great bare depression of the mountain, which from below would not have seemed to be more than a dimple. To the bottom of this we had to make our way, with but one brief peep ahead of the terminal cone to encourage us. The cone was certainly much nearer, but surprisingly more distant than I had expected to find it from that vantage; and our outlook was more restricted than we should have found it in

most of the byways of the village below. The ground of that basin, and up the farther slope of it, was broken and thinly grown over with coarse grass. But I must confess that I ceased to pay much attention to the details of our circumstances, for I had the feeling which, I suppose, used to trouble those who could hear, as they approached him, the grumblings in the very belly of Moloch. We were very much by ourselves, and the god, although as yet his face was hidden from us, was immense and powerful. Now we knew it. We smelled him now and then. His breath was of the Pit. I began to have premonitions of what was the security of the tenure of those spice gardens down below. We toiled up to the top of the ridge which veiled the face of the god.

At last, there he was. He was black and naked, and smoke was drifting from his head. And he was still some distance away, apart, elevated, and awful in the serene blue. It was clear that Milton had wrongly reported his expulsion from heaven. He still dwelt there. In fact, he had it to himself. He was solitary in the sky, monstrous and fuliginous under his lovely canopy, with a desolate court about him, and a footstool of blackened ruin from which the angels had fled.

Before we could mount to his throne we had to make another long descent, as it were an act of obeisance; and as the Dutchman, who had become very humble, advanced deferentially over the cinders and clinker, I could see plainly that, though we might hope to be ignored, divine compassion in this spot was as absent as the supernal choir. Our only luck would be to find the god asleep.

This, too, was the worst stage of the journey. We were compelled to forget our outward prospects. We had to keep our eyes searching for likely foothold in the tumult of the knives and ax-blades of the slag. A slip in that chaos of spiked and edged metal would have been ugly. A few minutes of the exercise made us pause. There was not a sound. The buzzing of an invisible fly was remarkable. During the pause I noticed in surprise that our exertions had taken us but a little distance; the journey to the bottom of the descent and up the final slope had been prodigiously lengthened since we had discovered what a walk there was like. The two Malays, I observed, were seated on the top of the ridge we had left, and were again in contemplation. They were not fools. They had no desire to look into the gape of a volcano. Their curiosity was already satisfied. Around us on the litter of broken metal were scattered numberless great bowlders that had acquired a horrid iridescence and some flowers of sulphur on cooling; they were the bombs which the god throws about when he is playful. But at the moment all sound had ceased except the murmur of that unseen fly, who kept with me for company; and the only movement was the quivering of the air over the heated stones, for the sun was magnificent.

By the time we reached the edge of the crater every ten yards had grown to a mile, and we were in the tired mood to be insulting, even if challenged by Cerberus. There was no sign, however, that our approach had been noticed. We were free to gaze into the open mouth of the god. He was fast asleep, and breathing so gently that his gusts of vapor were slight and unalarming. Our

own foothold was more disconcerting than the crater. It was not easy to find a standing place that was clear of communication with the nether fires. Vents and fissures everywhere were exhaling hot mephitic gases, and when I thought I had found a corner, by a huge bomb, which gave me a space exempt where I might be at ease, a fumarole presently became active under my feet and sent up strong sulphurous blasts. The rocks about me were bright with the lichens of Avernus, lurid incrustations of chemicals which showed more than anything else the kind of garden we were in.

The crater itself was halved by a wall, and the half within our view—we did not visit the other half—was a precipitous hollow the bottom of which seemed choked with rocks; but as to that I offer no definite opinion, for I did not climb down far enough to satisfy a scientific conscience, but only a conscience which is amenable to desire. Those stained cliffs were not usual. The crags were calcined red and black, and they were blotched with sulphur and verdigris. There were occasional bursts of steam. That gape was loaded and charged. The desire to play adventurously inside such a muzzle vanished at the sight of it. When the natives of Ternate prudently assemble their canoes at signs more violent than usual, and even abandon their nutmeg groves, they are not showing timidity, for on the summit I got the impression that in the belly of the island there was a power latent which could lift it bodily from the sea.

But where was the sea? As soon as we turned from the crater and looked outward we forgot the nether fires. There was no sea, however. There was no sky. There was only a gulf of light which was blue to infinity.

We were central in space. We looked southward for the cluster of the Moluccas, but in that blue vacancy the islands and the clouds were all immaterial; the isles of Motir, Makian, and distant Batchian were mere conjectures, though in that clear and tranquil light I imagined I could see as far as Paradise and the solution of sorrow. But what is an island when the clouds float below it? There we saw Motir, the nearest of those suppositions of land, a frail and pallid wraith which did not move from its place in the blue, but was constant in the midst of the traveling islands of cloud. Some of them, in appearance, passed under it. Gilolo had sunk profoundly. It was only a lower abstraction of bays and promontories. Beyond it the glimmering sapphire was the Pacific. Our near neighbor, Tidore, and the lower slopes of our own island, were occasionally revealed; we had immediately below us at times a far but vivid memory of the green world we left one fine morning. But that memory would dissolve under lambent white ranges of cloud, and again we were marooned on a raft of burnt rocks translated to the neighborhood of the sun. The clouds of the trade-wind were much more substantial than Gilolo. They approached us as lunar continents, resplendent and majestic, moved down rapidly on our meager upper foothold as though to sweep us along, but divided below us and surged past in shining ranges while our raft in midway space felt anchored to but the slenderest hope.

It was with reluctance that we began our return. We had a surmise that we should like to continue forever in that upper light where what was mundane was reduced to faint symbols and abstractions, but doubted the value

of our intuition. We had but little faith that we could maintain ourselves in that rare light, in that serene expanse; and perhaps we were right. We are not ready for it yet. We plunged downward rapidly, once we were over the slag heaps, and were soon in the gloom of the forest. The forest seemed more secure, its darkness more homely, its troll-like shapes more in accord with the heart of man, than a luminous vision of eternity.

I do not know how long it took us to descend. We fell automatically. Fatigue flung us, at times, long distances which did not seem to bring us any nearer to home. The never-ending jolts in weariness destroyed thought, and reduced the mind to a heavy enduring lump. My personal lump acquired a measure of intelligence again when at last some inconstant sparks in the air took my attention, and I found they were fireflies in a Chinese graveyard. We were nearing sea-level. Then music approached, and lanterns, and a wedding party passed by, with tom-toms, pipes, and dance. My friend, the Dutch missionary, stood near. "I've been praying for you," he remarked, grimly. He was thinking of the nether fires. But he did not know that perhaps it was his very prayer which had saved me from the danger of a transcendental mirage of sublimity.

CHAPTER XXIX

August 6.—A cloudless morning in the Java Sea, and the dry monsoon from the southeast is fresh and strong. In the southwest, at seven o'clock, the suggestion of the mountains of the island of Baly was high in the sky, but no land was under that celestial range. At noon our steamer was passing down the Allas Strait, with the peak of Lombok to starboard, a dark cone resting on a wide kingdom of cloud, and from under the cloud the verdure of the island descended to the sea. Close to our port side were the tumbled uplands of the island of Sumbawa. Sumbawa, like all the islands of the Lesser Sundas to the east of Lombok—Flores, Sandalwood, and Timor—is under the subjection of a dry wind from Australia, and its bare pale hills and bright grasslands are remarkable after the coasts loaded with forests of the other islands of Indonesia. Lombok, on the starboard side of the ship, is a much darker green, and has no open uplands. It is a quite different personality from Sumbawa, its neighbor.

August 7.—This morning I woke in my bunk thinking a Malay was running amok. The frightful lamentations of his suffering victims brought me up at a bound. I peeped out, but could see only a line of palms individual against the screen of a morning mist. The chief officer then paused at my cabin door, but he was calm. He always is. That noise? We are at Ampenan. We

shall take here three hundred pigs for Singapore. The horrific wailings then broke out afresh. The chief officer smiled, and compressed his nose with his fingers significantly as he went for'ard.

There are already on this ship hundreds of cockatoos and lories from New Guinea and the Moluccas—the speculations of Chinamen, I believe. Among the many kinds of lories is a crimson bird with green and gold markings, but named by ornithologists, with unfailing reason, the Garrulous. If a Malay does run amok among us now, the cries of the stricken will be unheard in this maniacal din. Though I should not blame the pigs. I think, on the whole, it would serve us right. Each pig is stuffed into a crate of cane, of his own shape and almost of his size, and the crates are stacked into living barricades with alleyways between. To walk through one of those alleyways—supposing you are indifferent to wet muck, heat, and smells—is to arouse the cries of the hopeless sufferers in Purgatory. The pigs scream at you. They call down a murrain upon you. You feel shamed by those intent little eyes. But one cried and cried. Its leg was broken.

August 8.—We have been crawling since early morning under the coast of Baly, with Gunong Agdeng itself, 9,500 feet, looking down at us. The stark and calcined cone is deeply scored; but the *sawahs,* or cultivated terraces, reach so far up the mountain's slopes that they appeared to the eye to be parallel markings on impossible declivities. At one place on the shore a Hindu temple was distinct, just above the surf. Baly, of course, has been faithful to Brahma. The Mohammedan conquerors of Java appear to have left the hot and

resentful natives of Baly, the island next door, to their ancient evil ways; and doubtless the soldiers of the Prophet were wise, as since then the Dutch have discovered. The Balinese, one may guess, regarded Mohammed as Orangemen do the Pope, and it happens, too, that the men of Baly are famous as makers and users of the kris. The hilts of all their choicest weapons are carved into the scowl of the Hindu war god. The Balinese are fanatical, as we say of an enemy when his obstinate bravery becomes a nuisance, and at times during their affairs with the Dutch a whole community has chosen to die, flinging itself on the bayonets and bullets. In 1906 the Dutch were at war with a rajah of the island, who came out with all his court in a sortie, not with the intention of fighting, but of dying to escape dishonor. Brahma does not seem to encourage Falstaffs. It was only in 1908 that this island was brought under the direct rule of the Netherlands. We landed at Buleleng, on the north of it, in a surfboat, and Baly soon made us regret that we had not gone there earlier and now had not long to stay. The island is extravagantly fertile, and after seeing so many other Malay islands the people of Baly, though of the Malay race, appear foreign. Their *campongs* are different. The hamlets are hidden within walls of mud, and the huts are small and squalid. There are many pigs about, and fetishes dangle everywhere from trees and the thatches of the homes. The people are taller than most Malays, lighter in color, upright and independent in their bearing, and good-looking. The women are bare to the waist. They have a very beautiful ox, the domesticated variety of the *canteng*, a biscuit-colored beast with white stockings,

a creature with an action which compels one to watch it as it strides past. There are shrines and temples, or the remains of temples, everywhere along the roads, but to me they were only the manifestations of a congested aberration of reason. At Sangsit there is a remarkable example, built, like all I saw, of a red stone which somehow was in accord with the malignant masks that leer from its carvings. These temples are roofless. There is an outer portal at Sangsit, and beyond it a courtyard with its walls and stone columns crawling and convulsed with figures of demons peering from a tangle of leaves, flowers, and intricate symbols; other portals within lead to more secluded courtyards, and all of them are piled with stonework so tortured that one recoils, as though from the pointless intensity of a maniac's heated and frenzied labors. When once the human intelligence gets away on an interesting bypath in seclusion it soon makes the dark and startling mysteries of the beehive and the anthill look like plain daylight. The "coal sacks" of the Milky Way, as we call those areas of unplumbed night, are not so awful and admonishing as the lightless deeps of the human mind.

August 9.—We are anchored off Sourabaya again, and we are perplexed by a problem in morals. The chief officer, who flatters me with his innocent assumption that all Englishmen quite easily find their way about in morals, supposes that I can help him to unriddle this difficulty. Many of our crew have deserted; but, as the mate gravely explained, his best men are loyal. Our mate, whom I respect and admire as an excellent seaman and citizen of the world, then conducted me to a portion of the forward shelter deck where our men

are berthed. There, I was surprised to observe, presiding over trays and baskets of stewed fish and red pepper, matches, sweetmeats, cigarettes, and fruit, were twelve dark but comely vestals, their shiny black hair maintained in gracious coils with gold ornaments. Their *sarongs* would have been envied at a Chelsea Arts ball; their muslin jackets were frail designs in white mist. Their bangles and rings were worth many guilders. They lifted their eyes to us—or, to be accurate, to the chief officer, who is a tall and handsome young man, with the badge of authority—and were as demure, timid, and appealing as gazelles.

"What must I do, Mr. Tomlinsohn? Do I want zhese women here? No. I will not have it. I do not like it. Do zhey zell matches? Yes, and no. I know zhose matches. But if I pack zhem off, I lose my ozzer crew. Do I shut my eye?"

His proper distress was manifest. He must keep good order in the ship. That is his duty. But he must see the ship is worked out of barbor to-morrow or the day after. That also is his duty. I assured him that certainly this was a matter which only our captain could decide. The captain would know what ought to be done, for not only is he an experienced navigator, but a member of the Dutch Reformed Church, I am neither.

August 13.—The captain has had several new orders daily, and for nearly a week we have moved about the north coast of Java—Sourabaya, Samarang, Pekalongan, and Bawean. But Bawean is not Java; it is a lump of isolated forest in the sea between Java and Borneo. Its natives have a good reputation in Singapore as ser-

vants and chauffeurs, and we went there to get some; they are also famous for their brand of sleeping-mat, a fact which was of no interest to me till I saw some of those mats, when at once I coveted them. They are certainly a loving tribute to Hypnos.

At Sourabaya we sweltered for days while waiting for cargo, which was on the quay, but which we did not get. A fleet of steamers was waiting for sugar. The go-downs of Sourabaya were full of sugar; but the ships sail light, nevertheless. The follies of Europe blight even the crops in far tropical islands. I have seen the price of copra drop on a beach of Celebes at the bare rumor of another French movement in the Ruhr. We left that copra on the beach. The natives could not accept the price, and were frankly puzzled that their labors should have been wasted, and that now they were unable to give our captain their orders for hardware and cottons, which would have gone to Europe. From this distance, Europe does appear indecipherable. Paris and London might be, from their behavior, provincial villages. Europeans cannot see yet that steam and the telegraph have made one undivided ball of this planet. Careless makers of mischief throwing stones from the Quai d'Orsay may smash windows in the Pacific. That we should love our neighbors as ourselves is too much to expect of men who, just as compelled by dark thoughts as the masons of the temples of Baly, are elaborating gases for choking their fellows. When I read in the East Indies the last telegrams and wireless messages from Europe, and see the direct consequences on Malay beaches, my feelings are the same

as when I looked at the leers and grimaces of that stonework celebrating the travail of Baly's pagan soul. O little town of Bethlehem!

August 15.—Singapore was in view in a heat haze at 7 A.M. I was wondering what now I should do and to whom I could go. That array of vague buildings, and the crowded shipping of the anchorage, had no place for me. Everybody else on the ship was energetic and determined and knew precisely what he must do, and was getting ready for it. Now, I did meet at Singapore, when first I was there, a principal of an English line of ships who kept about him in the tropics, by some miracle, the coolness and divine certainty of an ancient British university; and somehow, by prescience, by hints, by cunning stratagems, he made the temperature of that city lower for me than it was for others. If only I could find him when I landed! But he did not know I was coming. Our ship had not got way off her when I saw one tug detach itself from the rest of the indeterminate shipping, and I thought it was making for us. We anchored; and that tug had to back a bit and then come ahead again on the stream while our gangway was lowered for health officers, our ship's agent, and customs men. And there was my friend sitting in a wicker chair in the fore part of that tug like a god, cool, directive, with the gift of tongues, knowing all. And yet it is wondered why half the tonnage of the world is under the Red Ensign! His foot was on the gangway as soon as it was fast. The Dutch officers were very annoyed. Even their own agent had not arrived! Would not my friend wait a little? Wait? He calmly

stepped aboard, stayed there till he saw all my belongings were in the right order, and steamed ashore with me to breakfast—which was laid—before the other passengers had done more than wipe their hot brows in a prefatory way.

CHAPTER XXX

THAT romantic seaport town of the Orient made him uneasy. He wanted to get away from it. Yet how it had attracted him once—but that was when it was only a fine name on the map of the coast where the Indian Ocean meets the China Sea. Its upheaval of life startled him with a hint that it was without mind and did not know its power and what it was doing. This life seemed to have no intelligence; it was driven by blind impulse, even to its own destruction. Humanity would go on, without knowing why, and without getting anywhere, till its momentum failed.

He would have to get away from the place. If Christ himself were there he would have to pull a jinrickshaw till he dropped, or sweat from sunrise to dark in an evil barge, even if he were lucky enough to escape one of those many diseases with a course as certain, in that climate, as a spark in tinder. He would have no name, though he had God's last word to men. He would be only a bubble on that broad tide, and when he went out, who would notice it on such a flood?

But questions about human life in the East might just as well be addressed to the silent jungle at the back of the town. That was fecund, coarse, and rank. No way was to be found through it. It climbed for air and light and clung to its neighbors, glued itself to them and choked them or was choked, coiled in strong sappy

lengths, was full of thorns and poisons, though sometimes it had a beautiful blossom and a sweet smell. The seaport was like the jungle. Its people flowing in dense streams incessantly through its streets were moved by powers without more purpose or conscience than the unseen causes of the jungle and the coral reefs. These Chinese were not men and women, but conflicting torrents. And the white people only appeared to be different. But they were not. They were fewer, and so more noticeable. They were drifting on the same casual flood. They kept themselves cleaner and safer by superior cunning; but they were going the same way, with the same barbarous indifference. Duty was whatever was most pleasant. Beauty was as far as the sunrise and sunset. Conscience was a funny prohibition of freedom. He would have regretted that he had left England, only he began to see that the Orient, London, and the jungle were all driven by the same unknown causes to an undesigned end. Human life had come to the earth just as fungus comes at a certain incidence of moisture and warmth, and as it would slough when the right focus faded. All these movements of life would slow and stop as unreasonably as they began and continued, and nobody would ever know why.

Some of the men he met there enjoyed it. They preferred life without any restrictions. They quoted Kipling—they were always quoting Kipling. You were broadminded if you did as you pleased. Places like Malay Street were in the nature of things in the tropics, like hibiscus blossoms and fevers. It was no good expecting tabernacle notions to be helpful in that climate. Nothing mattered in life except to see that you

did not get stung through carelessness when taking the honey.

He would have to get out of it. He boarded a little coasting steamer, and then learned she was bound for Siam. Anywhere would do. Bangkok would be another heaving pool of men, but there would be an interval of the sea between, which would take some time to cross. He had thought, when he left London, that he was escaping the shadow of the war, which was the shadow of humanity without a head; but either that shadow was everywhere or else it was indistinguishable from his own. She was an old, neat, and homely little steamer. The *Brunei* could have been lowered into the hold of a liner. She might have been a token out of the past of what had been good and solid. Yet her character would have been plain only to a sailor or an experienced traveler, because her lower deck was a tumult of Malay and Chinese passengers and her crew of natives, and parrots, and shouting Chinese stevedores, and cargo hurtling through the air on hooks and slings.

There were four other saloon passengers—English planters and traders. One shared his cabin. That fellow was already occupying it, grunting as he stripped himself, "to get into something dry." The cabin smelled of his acrid body. "I've been ringing for that damn Chinese steward for ten minutes. Seen him about? I want a drink. . . . But I know what it is. They're trying to hold me off. I'll have it, though; I'll have that drink and another. Bible Brown can't stop me."

"Who's he?"

"Don't you know him? He's the skipper. The only man out here who thanks God at table with his head

bowed over tinned food. It's a fact." His cabin mate chuckled while his head struggled with his shirt. "And he's against the booze and the ladies. But I ain't. Not in this God-forsaken world. How does he live?" His cabin mate dropped his heavy bulk suddenly on the settee and began to pull off his drawers.

So he left that small place to his chance companion. The collars, hair brushes, cigar boxes, boots, and clothes of that big, prompt, perspiring fellow were scattered over both bunks, the hooks, and the floor. Just forward of the cabin a little man in uniform was leaning over the rail, and in a mild voice was calling some advice to the lower deck. Then the little man turned wearily and absently, but saw him and surveyed him with friendly eyes for a moment in a detachment which seemed to put centuries between them.

"Good morning. Are you Mr. Royden? I've a parcel for you. Come with me." The little man led young Royden to a door over the top of which was the word "Captain." The uproar of the anchorage remained outside that cabin; it might have been an insulated compartment. Over a table by the forward bulkhead, between two port windows looking ahead, was a card with a bright floral design round the text, "Lo, I am with you alway." A pair of spectacles rested on a large Bible, which lay beside a blotting-pad covered with shipping documents.

"We shall be leaving in an hour, Mr. Royden. I hope you will be comfortable aboard. She's very small, this ship, and bad when she rolls, but she'll stand anything." The captain looked up at his tall young passenger, and touched his arm in a reassuring way; he

seemed tired and gray, as if he were holding on to a task of which now he knew the best and worst. His clipped and grizzled mustache and square chin checked an easy presumption on his good nature which might have been encouraged by his kindly brown eyes.

"If you want any books to read, there you are," said the captain. He nodded to a small glass-fronted cupboard. Royden took one step and glanced at the books with interest. Then he shook his head. He would not have shown a smile about it, only when he turned the captain met his look with whimsical amusement.

"I thought not," said Bible Brown. "Yet I don't know how I should have lived without them, out here, out here." The captain talked of politics, of the war, and of the affairs of the big town just outside, as though these were matters he had certainly heard about, were matters which experience teaches a man he should expect to meet in this world, and may take his notice for a moment from the real concerns of life. So Royden had been in the war, in France? Yes? He gazed at his passenger thoughtfully for a second, but asked no questions. Royden felt a little indignant. That had been the most awful thing in history; and he had seen it. But this cold little man, with his Bible, thought nothing of human life. That didn't worry him. He didn't care what became of it.

All that day they were passing the land, close in. That coast must have been the same when the earliest travelers saw it. Man had made no impression on it. It had defeated his feverish activities with a tougher and more abundant growth. The gloom of its forests looked

like a sullen defiance. It would give no quarter. The turmoil of humanity at the big seaport from which they had sailed that morning appeared to have less significance than ever. This jungle, with the least chance, would push that swarm of men and women into the sea again. The day died in flames behind the forest, a dread spectacle of wrath, as in a final effort, soon surrendered, to light an earth abandoned to dark savagery. Let it go.

The *Brunei* was in ultimate night, carrying her own frail glints, apparently nowhither. There was nothing in sight. The stars were hidden. There was only the melancholy chant of the surge, the song of the bodiless memory of an earth which had passed. On the lower deck, just showing in the feeble glow of a few lamps hanging from the beams, was what appeared to be a cargo of bundles of colored rags. The native passengers were compliant. Not a sound came from there. Beneath the nearest of the lamps a little child lay asleep on its back beside a shapeless heap of crimson cloth. With its ivory skin it looked as though it were dead, in that light. Its tiny face expressed repose and entire confidence. One arm was stretched out, as though it had reached for something it wanted before it died, but the hand was empty and the forgetful fingers were half closed over the palm. On the deck above, the three planters, round a table, were sitting in their pajamas, drinking. They were not talking. They appeared to have surrendered to everything, after trying to escape together under the one light in night for company and refuge. They did not look at him.

Royden remembered that the captain had told him he might go up to the bridge whenever he felt like it. He fumbled in the gloom forward of the deck house for the handrail of the ladder to the bridge, and felt his way up. For a moment he thought nobody was there, that the ship had been left to go where she pleased. Then he saw the head of a Malay, just the head in the darkness, apparently self-luminous, suspended, and with its eyes cast downward, as though steadfastly contemplating the invisible body it had left. In another moment Royden saw the head was bent over the binnacle. Then he heard a mild voice, as though it came from the sea beyond the ship, "Here I am." The captain was at the extremity of the starboard side of the bridge. The little man was only a shadow even when Royden stood next to him. He was leaning his arms on the rail, looking ahead. Neither spoke for some time. Nothing was to be seen ahead. There was no light and no sea.

"I suppose," said Bible Brown, presently, "the other passengers below are drinking."

"Yes. Well, some are sleeping."

The captain made no comment. Royden said, after a pause: "You must get a curious view of us. You see an odd habit or two of ours, for a few days, and then you see us no more."

Still the captain was silent. When he spoke, he said: "You are mostly alike. You are simple enough. I know you."

Royden was slightly startled. The old fellow had never seen him before. But he smiled to himself when he thought that these cranks, too, were all alike.

"You are all alike," continued the captain. "I see you once—once or twice—and not again. You cannot help yourselves. . . . Sometimes I wish I could help you, but there is no time. You all know where you are going, and you are gone too quickly."

The complete assurance of the old fellow! But what did he care for humanity, after all?

"You are going to Bangkok, Mr. Royden, aren't you?" asked the captain. "Some voyages ago I had a passenger for there. Young like you, but a girl, a child. She had come out from England. She was a little different from the rest of you. I thought she looked like my own daughter. Couldn't make out what she was going to do in a place like that—an innocent girl of about twenty. She asked me some funny questions about Bangkok. I could see she was frightened. Then it came out. A native prince had sent her money, and there she was, going to marry him. Do you know what that means? Well, I told her. Told her how many wives he had already. She cried. She didn't know till then. But do you think I could help her? No, Mr. Royden. She had taken the money, and spent it, and there she was. She said she was forced to do it now. It was her duty. I had to leave her at Bangkok. She was bound to go, she said. . . . Poor little soul!"

They both stared ahead. There it was entirely dark. The sound of the surge, to Royden, was like the droning of his own thoughts. All were drifting. Nobody really knew where he was going, nor why. Not even Bible Brown.

"I can't make out, Captain," he said, "how you find your way in a darkness like this."

"Find my way? This darkness is nothing. It is a fine night. I know my course. There is the compass. The darkness is nothing. I keep my course. To-morrow we shall be off Tumpat. I know where I am."

CHAPTER XXXI

After our little coasting steamer had worked clear of the noisy bewilderment of Singapore's crowded harbor the reality of the East dissolved. The East again was only a silent presentiment. For several days I saw to port the somber hills of Johore, Pahang, and Trengganu, and behind them each day the sun disappeared in an appalling splendor of thunder and flames. But those hills by the China Sea and the wrack of day above them were in the same world; one was no nearer to me than the other. The weather was heated and calm, and the sea was glazed, for the monsoon was northeast. I was bound for Bangkok. Yet Malaya was implicit in that magnificent dread to port at dayfall; though how could I enter it? How does one reach the sunset clouds? I had come to see that land, but I had given it up. I was going to Bangkok instead. Singapore is not Malaya —it is more Chinese than anything else; nor Penang; nor even Malacca. You may drift about from one anchorage to another in the China Sea and the Bay of Bengal—voyage along both sides of that strip of Asia which reaches down to the equator and is called the Malay Peninsula; or travel leisurely in a railway coach for days past inland stations with pleasing native names, or career for weeks over excellent roads, through miles of rubber plantations, jungle, tin-mining districts, old Malay hamlets, and modern Chinese compounds, and

feel all the time that you will never enter Malaya. I had tried every device in an effort to glimpse it, but it had eluded me; and soon I must go home. We ought to have more sense, of course, than to try to touch a dream, or to reach that place which exists but in the glamour of a name.

The agent of our steamer at one sleepy coastal station, when I asked him whether it was possible to travel inland away from the usual roads, shook his head. He did not know. He thought not. It was wild and uncertain. Nobody ever did it. He had been there nine years and had not been more than ten miles inland. That overseer of cargoes and manifests looked toward the hills, and I thought for a moment that his glance was half regretful. "No," he said; "I shall never know what is behind them. I'm too busy. And when I'm finished here I shall go, please God, straight to Dorking. Do you know Dorking in Surrey? That's where my hills are."

And his, I think, is the experience of nearly all the exiles from Europe on that coast. Those men are not really incurious. Their youthful ardor, the zest for adventure which carried them out, has been subdued. Commerce caught them on the way, and imprisoned and disciplined them. They have not seen and will never see more than the cocoanut and rubber plantations, estate inventories, poker at the club, tin mines, and coastal godowns and cargo manifests, of their fate. They do not talk with the natives, but with commercial travelers. The extent of London and New York and their unquestioned control is terrifying. Our maps give no indication of it. They seem to have men everywhere in bond-

age, and you find the chains are as despairingly stout and reliable on a Siamese beach as they are where fixed to their awful staples in Threadneedle and Wall streets.

So Bangkok, another great city, was the best that I could do. Nobody could help me to anything better. I was free to regard distantly from my steamer the home of the Sakai, the hills where the little forest people use poisoned darts and blow-pipes, and where, in fact, life is still unaware that it is nearly five hundred years since Vasco da Gama rounded Good Hope. I was now no nearer to those hills than if they were in another planet. There was nothing for it but to remain contented as a happy tourist, and not to ask for too much. A week's journey inland from most of those roadsteads by the mouths of rivers—called *kualas* on the local map—would get me to where the Malay folk were living in the way which was traditional before the coming of the English, even before the coming of the Portuguese. But if any sedentary person supposes that it is easy to break through the spell of the settled highways of this world then he had better try it. Only good luck will get one through; and I should like to hear how to arrange for the advent of that angel. In another two days we were due in Bangkok. There I should see fantastic temples, smell stale drainage, buy pictures of the place at the hotel office, drink and gossip with cynical exiles to kill the evenings, and then be more than glad to embark again. To feel the spirit of enterprise moving you is not enough; a door must be found, and the key to it. Malaya, however, was closed to me, as in fact it is to all but a few government officials, prospectors, and

men who are indifferent to prudence, time, space, and the neat virtues.

A young fellow passenger, to whom I had not yet spoken, that evening at dinner said something to the captain which I did not hear, and the captain thereupon turned to regard him in mild surprise and amusement. "Are you through," the captain said with a wise smile. "I hope you will like it, but I think not." An elderly planter next to me chuckled. The young man began to hum a tune, as though he did not hear.

"How will you do it?" said the planter.

"Oh, on an elephant, or walk it, if it comes to that, or take a *prahu.* I don't know. But I'm going."

"And you call that a holiday?" said the planter, smiling bitterly.

"No, I call it a lark," said the young man.

"I wouldn't do it for a tenth share in the ship," the captain assured me.

"Do what?" I asked, in suspicious curiosity.

"Why, make my own way to Ulu Kelantan, to where that river rises, somewhere among the rhinoceroses over there." The skipper pointed at the night beyond the open ports of the tiny saloon.

After that dinner I forgot my excursion to Bangkok. I did not want it. The young man assured me that he would not obstinately disapprove of my society, and that he thought I could furnish myself with what was needed for the trip up country at a place he called Kota Bharu. We should land next morning near there, at Tumpat. It was fortunate for me that night that those places were not on my map and that I could not prove

my new friend did not know what he was talking about, for otherwise I might still have been prudent and continued in comfort and boredom my voyage up the Gulf of Siam.

CHAPTER XXXII

We landed next morning at Tumpat, thus far justifying faith, for nothing noteworthy was visible from our anchorage. Tumpat is on the present main channel of the delta of the Kelantan, a river which changes its mind about its channels now and then; and from Tumpat crossed the river to Kota Bharu, the capital of the native state of Kelantan, where its Sultan resides. To have such a name, and a Sultan, and to be placed on the shore of the China Sea in such a light, should be enough for any town. From what I could see of it, one might do well at Kota Bharu. It has a rest-house, a rambling and capacious building of timber, where I thought it would be easy to stay for so long that one might forget to go. Near my bedroom wild bees had a home behind a beam, and I could sit and watch a living brown fresco moving its pattern on the planks of the wall. Next door to the bees was a colony of wasps. No courtesies were exchanged. The bees never went to the wasps, though the wasps occasionally came to look at the bees, but never stayed long, for the disapproval of the bees was instant, though they did not appear to resent some little tricks I played on them. While watching the bees one afternoon a chichak, a small gecko who lives on the walls and ceilings of every house and attends to the flies and moths, slid out of a crack about a yard from the bees. He seemed astonished by so great a number of flies, and

lifted himself on his hands to get a better view of them. He was obviously puzzled, and instead of his usual lightning dash he made a slow and careful approach to within a few inches of a bunch of the bees. Then he remained as still as the graining of the wood, till a bee happened to walk toward him. He fled back to his crack like the flick of a whip.

My friend I had found in the ship, whose name may be Smith, told me, however, that this was no time to watch flies. I must go to a Chinese shop and buy frying pans and provender, while he went to the Sultan's prime minister, or chancellor, or caliph, to obtain a mandate which would require the local chiefs to regard us friendly-wise.

That afternoon, by invitation, we saw a bull-fight, at which the Sultan and his court were present. The Malays of Kelantan, their disposition being entirely happy, delight in the fighting of bulls, buffaloes, rams, cocks, and fish. The Sultan, it was whispered, keeps registers of all the fighting animals in the state, is regularly informed of their condition, and arranges the tournaments. This was one. It was a sparkling festival. But for those fighting bulls, I should never have seen so many of the ladies of Kota Bharu. The massed colors of their silk *sarongs* and head scarfs were emphatic and influential. Each bull seemed to be hidden within the ambush of a rainbow; from his happy seclusion he sent out his distracting shrill challenges. They were humped cattle, small but athletic, with brass or silver guards to the points of their horns. Their hoofs were polished. Their coats played like satin with the light. They were haughty. To the caresses which

would have won the coldest rajah they were massively indifferent. They appeared to know that their part in the show was not love, and to sternly reject it. The favorite was a little black animal. He was quiet, even sleepy. He submitted to the shampooing of his coat and the massaging of his limbs with the proud nonchalance of a popular champion. Children might play with him, and they did. And while the children played, the bookmakers gave the picture a familiar touch of Epsom Downs. Malays are dour and irreclaimable gamblers, and I found that to share this human failing no knowledge of the vernacular is necessary. The betting was two to one on the champion.

The two bulls for the first round were led by their men into a large inclosure. There for a space they were fondled in opposite corners, while, so far as I could see, good advice was whispered earnestly into their ears. The guards to their horns were removed, and a man from each went over to inspect the sharp horns of the other animal, probably for poison. Then a gong droned, and the comely gladiators were marched to face each other at a distance of about fifty yards. The gong crashed, and the crowd raised the shrill and fearful Malay war cry. Each bull exploded in a cloud of dust.

I felt at that moment a spasm of apprehensive indignation at the cruelty of it; but the bulls understood each other. It was all right. Anyhow, one bull understood the other. The little champion appeared to be outmatched. He kept carefully his front on feet as nimble as a cat's, but was pushed about the field. I felt I could only wait for his end. There were sharp con-

vulsive onsets, or the fighters stood with horns interlocked, waiting for each other to move. But I noticed each time that it was the big aggressive fellow who moved first. Once the two fighters separated—gazed round calmly at us while their flanks heaved—ignored each other—showed clearly that this was fun and that they had had enough of it. But the war cry aroused them, and the cry rose an octave when they met in the shock of another charge. The champion stumbled at the impact. His opponent instantly became distinctly savage and more active, and the bookmakers thereupon raced round the inclosure, offering three to one on the champion, which I thought was ridiculous logic. The champion was bleeding at the shoulder. He was tired and was in retreat. Once or twice now, when their horns were mingled and they stood with their muzzles to the ground for a breathing space, like statues, watching each other, I thought I observed that the little fellow experimented with his challenger. He appeared to test him with a modest feint or two. Yet this only inflamed to fury his enemy, who drove him backward again straddle-legged over a dozen yards or so.

This happened once too often. At the end of one of these retreats the little champion played some caper. I do not know what. I could not see it. It was instantaneous. But there the big bull was, on his ribs, and his enemy's armed front was prodding his belly, daring him to move. The beaten bull, lately so aggressive, did not move. Once he raised his head, and if there was not in his eyes a pathetic appeal to let him off, then I do not know that expression. The champion un-

derstood it, like the gentleman he was. He turned away his head, as though he had forgotten something, and on the instant the defeated gladiator was on his feet and trotting away briskly to his corner.

CHAPTER XXXIII

With our possessions assembled into six small packs roped in rubber sheets, next morning at daybreak Smith and I took train for Rantau Panjang, a village on the right bank of the Golok River, twenty miles from its mouth—this is mentioned just in case there should be any curiosity to discover exactly where we were. The Golok is the division between Malaya and Siam. At that little village the headman, on reading our mandate, found three men for us without parley. And the chief of police, who happened to be an Englishman, was so alarmed by the inadequacy of our preparations and the puerility of our plans that he forced on me also a rifle and ammunition. I understood from him that I might be required to shoot a tiger or a seladang at any moment. "But don't shoot an elephant," he admonished me, "unless you must." I assured him that I would resist every temptation to harm a wild elephant unnecessarily. Thereupon we marched off. The policeman shook his head over us in mirthful pessimism.

It was ten in the morning; and the spaciousness of the bare and brazen prospect to which then we set our faces under that sun was a matter for firm courage. I could have played tennis with the rifle at the start. In less than an hour it was a worse evil than many tigers, for we had to cross some miles of padi fields and open land, all of it hard and rough in the dry season, with the loam

of the furrows and ridges as unaccommodating as granite. We marched toward a line of blue hills, but the shelter of their woods seemed at a distance no effort could measure. Smith was ahead of me, so I could watch the dark stains begin on his khaki tunic, and spread till their boundaries merged and the back of his jacket was uniform again with sweat. When he turned to me now and then I saw he was suffering, for he was of a stout and hemispherical habit of body. Yet certainly this was better than all the motor-cars and steamers, for at least we hardly knew where we were going, and had no idea where we should be that night. A spot named Nipong was mentioned; but by looking, first at the chart, and then at Smith, I judged that Nipong was best considered as a fond dream. We came to a swamp, then managed to scramble over a small tree prone across a stream (a rifle is useless as a balancing pole), and the track became a tunnel in a forest immediately it left the far end of the fallen trunk.

Nothing could be guessed of that path except that it would get more illegible the farther it beguiled us from the things that were familiar and understood. It would please itself, though perhaps not Smith, who was a little sketchy in his geography. He, indeed, appeared to be sure only that there was a lot of jungle to be traversed before we reached Nipong, where folk lived; and we were going to rely on Malay hospitality for shelter for the night. So I wondered in these circumstances what had gone amiss with me, because it is odd to feel tired, yet sure you can light-heartedly continue till the best man of the party has had enough of it.

I felt I had known the Malay jungle all my life. This

place had no incubus. It was still the first day there, and not even noon. I would not have used that rifle on any polite tiger, and it occurred to me from the look of the place that the animals there would be friendly. Besides, the Malay who had chosen to march near to me had rolled his *sarong* into a loin cloth. But for that he was naked. He was a middle-aged man, slender and tough, and his figure appeared to be so proper to that murky place where fragments of sunlight had sunk down the deep silence to rest on improbable and immovable leaves on the floor, that I knew I should be lucky if the two of us were designed to go on like that till we emerged from the other side of it, where the Bay of Bengal would stop us at a beach. I liked the mild but critical eye of that fellow. He did not look at me, but there could be no doubt he was appraising, by a standard we should find difficult to meet, the two white men who were with him, and I am bound to say I desired that that barbarian should not view me in any miserable, inadequate, thin, faded, apologetic loin rag of civilization. I did not want my culture to shame me. I will swear that fellow was a sound judge, whose verdict might be guessed only in the aloofness of his contempt. When the police inspector that morning had pointed to the far hills, and peered at us sardonically as we turned to go there, I was a little dubious of my sanity. Why was I asking for trouble? But something had happened to me in the meantime. I would have repudiated my past if I could have done so, denied St. Paul, pretended I had never heard of a doctor of literature (what on earth is that?), and swopped all the noble heritage of two thousand years of London for

a couple of bananas, only there can be no escape from what we are. I wished then that Mr. Santayana had been with us. I would have given even the bananas for a sly peep at my barbaric Malay as he viewed in that wild our more blanched and tenuous refinement. I wonder to what it really amounts? An accidental ray through the roof of that forest had dropped on it, and you could hardly tell Ancoats from Oxford; yet the Malay's quick and questioning glance had been not only revealing, but pleasing to me. There are other worlds, but we so seldom glimpse them.

We came to the sandy shore of a larger stream. It flowed swiftly and silently out of the darkness on one side of us and into the shades on the other. There was no bridge. Quite naturally I looked for it, because it is our right to cross a river by a bridge, and to find an inn on the other side of it. Our Malays did not pause. They walked straight in, somehow kept their feet with the water near their shoulders, climbed the opposite bank, and vanished within the foliage without looking round. It began to occur to me that I was expected to get wet, and I followed the natives with but the briefest hesitation. We are so used to the provision of bridges and things that at first it appears to be an oversight on the part of nature, and an affront to our dignity, to have to wet the shirt. Something was broken in my mind during that pause. On the other side, as I went up the sandy slope with heavier boots, I saw a footprint not made by our party. A tiger had been there before us. Crossing that little stream took me into a quite different region, where the usual counters of thought were not current. We use the supports of our civiliza-

tion without knowing they are there, and even suppose we are supporting ourselves. Profound philosophers will do this, unaware that without the favor of the rude tinkers, tailors, and candlestick-makers beneath them their minds would give way, would sprawl in a most uncultured and helpless manner next to an earth even ruder and more intractable than a revolutionary tinker, and that they would perish long before they could raise a few coarse oats for sustenance. I followed my Malay, as though I had not gone over a boundary which parted me from all that hitherto had kept my feet. What my civilization had given me, I realized, was altogether inadequate and counterfeit. Even my rifle was fraudulent. A philosopher's finest thought cannot move with the infernal subtlety of a tiger.

A little later another stream ran athwart our way. There was no wading over that. It was wide and swift, and moved with a silent power that betrayed its depth. There was no passage over it but by a fallen tree. The huge butt of the tree was on our side, and descended in a nasty curve to the center of the river, which in places swirled over the partly submerged bole. I knew I could not do it. "*Buaya,*" warned my Malay, and trotted over without a fault. And crocodiles, too? Smith essayed the pass ahead of me, but he began to treat his foothold too punctiliously just when his daring courage should have entered recklessly both his feet; paused, and made to look back; tried to go forward again; and fell. I was at that moment on a greasy length of it, waving the rifle about helplessly and trying not to judge how many more seconds I should last. Smith bumped off, but snatched at a projection and hung

on desperately. The current carried his legs downstream.

The Malays had disappeared ahead and what could I do? I cried savagely to him that if he let go he would have to die. I knew that he was almost at an extremity with fatigue, but at the shout he became lively, grabbed a better hold, and at last was aboard again, panting. I have no idea how I got over.

A tropical rain-forest is an experience which goes far to alter your conception of the quality of life. Life does not seem to be a tender plant. In the north, on the exposed ridges and sandy barrens of the world, life might be a patient but timid invader, grateful for the stoniest comfort, doing its best against the adverse verdict of fate, and perishing meekly in adversity. In a jungle of equatorial rains the earth itself is alive, and there is no death, and not even change. There are no seasons. Life is visibly as dominant a fact in the universe as great Orion in a winter sky. It is immortal. It is even terrifying in its heedless and unscrupulous arrogance, as triumphant as the blazing sun, and has no doubt that God has justified its ways. You may live with it, if you can. It has no other terms. This Malay forest varied in character. Where the ground was high it was more open, yet more dim; the trees were greater, and their buttressed trunks rose like the pillars of a cathedral whose roof was night. But on swampy ground, where day could in some diffused sort reach the earth, we could not step aside from the track. A lower riot of foliage was caught between the masts of the forests, spinous, tough, and exuberant. Bare cables were looped and pendent from above, roots meandered

over the earth like flat walls and like the rounded bodies of dead reptiles of interminable length. Climbing palms, the rattans, lifted green feathers into every space, and their barbed and flexible ropes frustrated every pass. Epiphytes and ferns were posed on all the knots and protuberances of the masts and spars, and one fern, the elk's horn, projected its masses of palmated green antlers in such abundance that it was more remarkable than the hosts on which it was parasitic. There was no sound. I paused to watch some colored flies hovering in a lath of sunlight, and their murmuring might have been the audible energy of the tense and still uprush of life about me. It was while alone, watching those insects, that I was surprised by my Malay coming back to me. He was evidently bothered by a difficulty. He told me that the other *tuan* was ill, was lying down in the path, and could not move.

Poor Smith was indeed on his back. He had propped his head on his helmet, and he confessed that this heat and fatigue were outside his specification. He was finished. He could not go another step. While kneeling beside him, pointing out that he was yet too young to give himself as food for ants, I noticed that my breeches were bloody and had to touch the leeches off my legs with my pipe. This was our introduction to those indefatigable creatures. The revulsion was mental, not physical. It is a shock to see the worms feeding on you before their time. Such haste is unseemly and not by the rules. I glanced at Smith, and then saw a group of them attached to his belly. He had not noticed them. How soon he was up! How well he stepped out! Even leeches can have their good points.

The day was slanting fast toward sunset, but there was no sign of any end to the forest. I found myself the leading file, and so discovered that when one reaches a queer place in the woods, some resolution is required to take it ahead of the others. For once I came out of the trees suddenly and unannounced, and found below me an extensive and forbidding inclosure in the jungle, a level lake of pale reeds round which the gloomy wall of the forest rose, as though to keep private and secluded what was there. The afternoon, sure of its privacy, was asleep within that secret bay in the darkness of the woods. Even Adam must have had some hesitances in the far and unfamiliar corners of his garden. The grass in this corner of the forest rose several feet above my head, and I parted it to find a way, remembering the while tales of the seladang, the bison who weighs a ton, does not wait to be insulted, but takes the initiative, and can reverse like a cat. But only the afternoon was asleep in that recess. Then the forest began again.

Within an hour of sunset, when even the Malays looked as though they had had enough of it, we came upon a wide clearing. The hills of indigo, which had been far from us in the morning, were now near. They were part of the forest. That open sandy space was loosely grown over with shrubs that were touched with the colors of flowers whose scents stirred only when we blundered past, as though nothing moved in that place except when man disturbed it. Its peace seemed as settled as eternal truth. I could look upon the pale bare stretches there of the sands of old floods as if this were not only another country, but I had entered another existence. Tired? I felt I could drop. But why are

some moments and some scenes of such nameless significance that, though all is strange, we feel there is no need to ask what is truth? The Golok River was near us. It might have been an upper reach of the river of life. It was of crystal and beryl. The façade of the Siamese forest opposite was of gracious pilasters of palms, with cornices and capitals of plumes; the roof was domed. The clouds of evening were of rose.

But Smith was done. No more of it. The Malays, he said, were deceiving us. This was Nipong. "There," he said, pointing, "is a house. I can see the plantains from here." Our men stood by disconsolate. They said nothing. But when I went to inspect this house something loathly stirred within the rank herbage on its floor; for it had no roof and most of its walls of palm matting had gone. We got going again. And it was almost dark when, for the first time in that long march, we came to betel and cocoanut palms (no doubt of it now) and presently to the huts. There was a fair cluster of them, all raised on stilts with clear spaces under them, and the paths between lumbered with the bulky black shapes of buffaloes. The beasts gave one sullen stare at us, and lumbered off with about as much sense of direction as runaway lorries. I thought they would carry the houses off their props and that we should be left shelterless after all. But, anyhow, the eruption brought out a frowning and elderly little man, who stood at a distance while he read the Sultan's letter.

He took us home. It was a larger house than the rest, with an unusual length of irregular ladder to its veranda. A corner of its bamboo floor was given to us, and a group of children became intent on our business

of unpacking. The chief showed us the river, where we could bathe. When I returned from it the day had gone, and I sat cross-legged with the Malays, dressed like them in *sarong* and *baju*, and feeling that I would have gone twice the distance for such a night. The heavy shadows of that old barn-like structure were hardly disturbed by a little brass oil lamp. Some men of the village gathered to gossip, and the women and children vanished I don't know where, but I could hear their voices somewhere in the rafters. Brass dishes were placed between us on the floor, with fruits and nuts, lansats, rambutans, mangosteens, and a kernel which tasted like walnut. One felt quite at home with these people. They spoke in low voices. They asked modestly about the outer world, but said nothing in criticism. Perhaps they believed us. Smith fell asleep, and I lay on a mat which the chief spread for me, and pretended to sleep, but was listening, smelling the whiffs which came up through the flooring of old durian shards, looking at the gossiping heads of the chief and his cronies and at the grotesque shapes on the wall, whether antlers and horns or shadows I did not know, and at a star or two showing through the cracks in the wall. When I woke, the day was entering the hut in splinters, but all my friends were motionless bundles about me.

CHAPTER XXXIV

It is as pleasant to travel afoot in the tropics, so long as you keep intact the curiosity of a newcomer and do not expect life to be buoyant near towns, as it is in Devonshire; though one ought not to stroll off into the deep end of the unhelpful wilderness, like Smith, if the vital organs are lardaceous. To walk is the only way to learn where you are. Yet perhaps it does not get done so easily as this paragraph. Trifles that would be disregarded at home may become perilous where the sun can be an evil-doer. An extra risk should be looked at before it is taken; and fretfulness when all goes awry is as bad as ptomaine poisoning, though its effects are not so quickly obvious. Shelter and food on numerous occasions will be worse than sketchy, yet as to that it should improve the morals of a civilized man to realize how narrow is the division between his precious life and what comes after it. That division between here and hereafter in a tropical wild is so thin that you might see clean through it if what is behind it were not so dark. I set out into the woods without a mosquito curtain, because those who had never been so far advised me that I should not want it. No fever there, naturally. There never is. Yet later I used good measures of quinine and aspirin on natives who looked as sad as malaria usually makes a victim. And one despondent exile to whom I spoke of this replied simply, "I don't know why

some of 'em make such a devil of a fuss about West Africa, when there's this place." The mosquito net should have been an essential part of the kit. We slept in native huts, where any lurking *anopheles* are almost sure to be infected. Besides the mosquitoes, there are the little extras. A bug of some kind—the jungle bugs are of many kinds—stung me the first night, and left a weal which was not as large as a hot cheese plate, but felt like it. That reminder I retained for about a week. The little things count, most decidedly. We had floundered, one day, through the mud and ordure where a herd of wild elephants had rested during the heat; then we spent some hours in a canoe, and a bare foot, though I did not know it, was exposed to the sun. The consequent blisters, which became confluent, were alarming if I looked at them too long.

Then there are the leeches. An injection of the determined character of these shameless little parasites would carry a broken-spirited man to fortune against all the laws of the land, unless the gun of an indignant victim stopped him. The leeches are after blood, and they get it, if a body comes their way. They confess only to salt or tobacco juice, once they have attached themselves. A traveler, his mind occupied, may feel nothing when some leeches take hold of him, but later he is sure to note the nasty crimson mess he is in. They are small creatures, at the most not more than an inch and a half in length, and not thicker than twine before they have fed. Their color is almost black or dark olive, sometimes with yellow markings. Wherever the woods are moist these patient creatures sit on their behinds, on the ground, on the foliage, and wait. At the

first tremor betokening an approaching wayfarer, man or beast, they stretch out eagerly and rotate in the air for a grip. Should you stand still and watch the track you will see them converging frantically for your boots, all overjoyed by the lucky chance that you are waiting for them and fearful of being late. They never miss such a chance. There are no sluggards among the leeches. And you cannot always be ready to fence with them. If they reach a boot heel they keep up their pace; they do not stop to congratulate themselves with a partial success, but mount desperately till they find a loophole in the clothes—a pinhole seems enough—and the instant they touch flesh they are fast to it. On one occasion I picked a leech off my sleeve just as it had arrived (from Heaven knows where) and it became part of a finger at once. They are as tough as rubber piping; no good treading on them; that helps them to a landing. In some places their numbers make a traveler furiously indignant, and but for the fact that they go off duty at sundown a night in the forest might become a very long sleep. Puttees do not sufficiently protect when on the march. It is necessary to carry carbolic soap, and after wading through a stream to give the wet puttees so generous a rubbing with it that the movements of walking convert the soap into a pungent lather. I liked to see that pretty lacework of soap suds round my ankles. It certainly disheartened the industrious little wretches.

On the chart the place was called Gemang—the usual tiny circle on the map with a name beside it to show that men had congregated on that spot of earth. But in fact it was only a large communal dwelling, a raft of boughs, raised on stilts ten feet off the ground and reached by a

ladder. Round three sides of the raft were cabins. One was given to us. This dwelling, like all of its kind, was of some substance; the main beams and props were of fairly heavy boles, and the superstructure of bamboo. The walls were of flattened bamboo worked into matting, and the roof was thatched with palm leaves. All was bound together with rattan. There was no iron in it. Smith felt he would like a rest before going over the divide between the Golok and Kelantan rivers. We stayed at Gemang for a day. The novelty of our position sustained me, for the people were good natured and went quietly about their business, the women husking rice in a wooden trough with pounders, while the children chased away the chickens. I don't know what the men did except that they crouched by us and talked, though sometimes one would take out a monkey to climb for cocoanuts. When the monkey was not climbing for our refreshment it was chasing the cats headlong over the thatch for its own, which in Malaya is sensational activity.

I felt that night that I should be glad to go in the morning. There were many ants. A spider like a mouse ran out of my mat when I unrolled it. Other things were flying and crawling. It was an old and harboring place. Each bamboo of the floor under me had its separate reminder on my body; and beneath them a buffalo had taken refuge. When he rose to change his uneasy couch, then I too rose several inches. The buffalo smell was adulterated with that of durian—a quaint mixture. One side of our cabin was open, and so, when not watching the black patterns of leaves against the stars, I could look at the heads of the gossips

round the tripod flesh-pot, with its inconstant flames. There had been a whisper of a supernatural creature in this community, of which I took the usual notice of a tired skeptic. During the night, however, I did hear inhuman howls and gibbering and some thumping, and put it down, not to a revelation of the supernatural, but to the monkey, which was a robust creature. In the morning, from the cabin opposite, the head of a man on his belly poked out from the interior darkness, and his mouth slavered. The sacred creature was an idiot, and we learned that he had been there for twenty years and had never come out of his hut. It was a pleasure to pack up and go.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE forest changed our thoughts as soon as we were in it. We began to climb southwest of the Golok Valley through a tunnel in the jungle. It was a day—somewhere, anyhow, it was day, though hardly there, for the valley was deep and the morning was early. The woods might not have been there. They looked unbegotten. The trunks were contorted and askew. They reclined in a watery light, wet and rotting, and rocks like unplumbed reefs in a submarine deep had to be climbed. One would not expect to hear a sound there, and in fact there was no sound in that twilight unreality. I stopped to listen. There was but a noise in my head, which I tried to shake out. But this delay left me far in the rear. Then I could not hear even our party, and so could not reach them. They might have floated upward to the surface out of it. As I crawled on along the interminable floor, looking for signs of them, I had a distinct inclination to glance backward over my shoulder to see if anything were following me. But what could have been following me?

By noon we were near the height of the divide, and paused for a rest. A stream was beside us, unwinding slowly past hindering trees whose roots were like outcrops of weathered rock. The water was black, like the roots, till I noticed spectral fish, vividly dyed, suspended low down among the buttresses of what could

have been a column of basalt. The water was really clear. Yet the fish could have been an illusion, so unlikely were their circumstances; but I was too tired for any verification. One becomes weary to the point of moribundity on rough ground in a forest of the equatorial rains. You don't care any more.

By the time the day is mellow you have tripped in fatigue too often to bother about anything that matters. Nothing matters. Another stream has to be waded just when you had hoped you would arrive at camp almost dry. There is a pause to pick off the leeches. When you try to see whether there are any attached to your person where direct vision is difficult and in part impossible, you slip in the mud. Impatiently you step out. The leeches you can't see may stay where they are, and be damned to them. Anyhow, the last stream washed off the mud. Then a quagmire made by elephants is reached, and the muck is returned to you, and more also. Out of the bog you mount a steep bank, feeling you could move no faster if the elephants were charging it, and slip; as you fall you grasp desperately at a rattan full of thorns, which gives way. Then there are more leeches to pick off.

Some hours before sunset we descended to an upper reach of the Kelantan River, and came to a hut occupied by two white men. The one who met us wore a beard, but not much else except a pipe, for his trousers were useless for their purpose, and his singlet hung from one shoulder. I understood he was prospecting for gold. I hoped that his cheerfulness was more than mere ignorance of his fate, for his alabaster pallor suggested that long exposure to a moist heat had drained the

virtue from his flesh. His companion, an older man, then briskly approached. But he was dressed so neatly that perhaps he respected the society of the trees. His bearing reminded me that through mud and leeches a stranger could not see me at my best. He stood regarding our small party as though it were a dog on a parade ground; I fancied there was still something remaining of the sergeant major about him and that recently he had been sardonic with duffers. He was nursing a Winchester rifle as if it were a delicate child. He surveyed us steadily for so long that I wondered what he would say when he spoke. But he only remarked, "My God!" I dare say we were, too.

This man Ryan showed us where to bathe, and told us what not to do with our wounds, though his manner implied that probably we would be fools, nevertheless. Then he listened to the story of our wanderings without a comment; he merely asked at times what could have been supposed was an irrelevant question, though he made no use of the answer. When our jejune recital was over he looked a little pensive and whimsical for a moment, then rose to place about the platform where we were reclining some dishes of hot food and basins of coffee. We looked out to the river. It was deeply below us, in a narrow passage, gliding over shelves of granite. The forest was a somber wall on the other bank. Above those personal trees some hills were monstrous and salient, for the sun had just gone down behind them. Ryan pointed at the hills with his knife. "Only seladang and Sekai over there."

With a friend beside me whose profile was like Ryan's I should regard the immediate possibilities of any quite

primal savagery with equanimity. The thought of it was even pleasant. We were going over there, too, in the morning. The light in the clouds beyond those hills was that of dread and wonder. A wind, an eddy from a distant thunderstorm, brought the scent of a tree in flower from the forest behind us, and carried away the heavy heat down to the river. The coffee had a flavor notably good. That was the way coffee ought to taste. A dog sat next to me, waiting for scraps. As I spoke to him I saw a leech uncoil from inside his nose and elongate and retract. One must accept such things along with sunsets and sonatas, but they do seem like insults to truth and beauty. The leech, for his part, might ask what did we suppose men and dogs were for, in a world of good leeches. The dog took no notice of his familiar, for he had no fingers to take hold of the thing; the dog was philosophically resigned. But the leech, by jerking out of sight like a piece of tense elastic released, proved to me at once that fingers were of no use against him. Ryan said the worm had had a lodging in the dog's nostril for a month, and that it declined to be ejected. Yet it was not easy for the coffee and food to maintain its flavor with that before me, so I got a pair of forceps; and Ryan, with exclamations of vicious joy, presently executed the leech on the platform, beside the tin of biscuits. If you regard this sort of outrage boldly and steadily, the light in the sky remains almost unimpaired. The world is what we think it is; most accommodatingly, it changes with our moods. It is not always easy, therefore, to maintain a good light in the sky.

Our light failed. The opposite hills merged into the

night, though arcs of them shaped again when lightning momentarily expanded in the clouds beyond. We could hear the river below, as though the thin remainder of time were rapidly running out, and we were being left stranded on a high solitude in eternity. Ryan's quiet voice made eternity most homely. His presence on the Plutonian shore, should we have the luck to meet him there, will instantly cause the awful thought of the lord of that domain to be of less moment. Some irreverent plot against Doom may even begin then to rehabilitate the humbled soul of man. Ryan seemed to have learned, in No Man's Land in France, a few artful underplots against the august front of eternity itself, and I found myself chuckling at its somber presentment, now and then. When a victim regards even his own extinction as a bit of a joke, can he be extinguished? Even the local cattle of some Malay settlers who lived near appeared to be aware of the nature of our hut. I heard, in the dark, grunts and blunderings near us, snorts and hard breathing. What was this? Well, the animals came around like that every night, confound them! No good sending the dog against them. The brutes came back, as close as they could. They came for society and safety. The tigers never approached *his* place at night.

CHAPTER XXXVI

It is all very well, but one must pay for blundering carelessly through the hindrances which discourage most men from the central hills of Malaya. Yet a reward for being thus fatigued and sickened comes early every morning in the forest. The light of dawn might be—perhaps it is—merely the tranquillity and assurance of one's own spirit. What of that? The soaring palms, the green jib-sails of the giant arums, the pale shafts and lofty domes of the great trees, shine as though the radiance were theirs. Insects glance over the new blossoms in the clearing like vagrant prismatic rays. But the hills have gone. They have not returned with the morning. Where they were dominant last, sunset is but brilliant vacuity, which is regarded with astonishment, for hills certainly were there, and a river below them. And there the river still glides, past the wall of the forest opposite, in long inclines of flawless crystal and breaks of foam, over its shelves of granite; though now it is soundless because all the world is murmuring. But where are the hills? Where they rose opposite, standing over the valley in abrupt and gigantic shapes, is only a glimmering pallor, the luminous depth of emptiness, which thins upward into the blue of the sky. While surprise still stares at the place from which the hills have vanished, a fragment of the distant forest appears in midair, a miraculous satellite of earth, its

tiny trees distinct in the upper blue. That translated wood grows downward as the jungle mist clears, till a shoulder of a dissolved hill has reformed.

Ryan cried breakfast, and by the time the pipes were lit all the hills had come back and the ecstatic dog was strangling a snake under the hut. Then we began to load a canoe—we waded in, guided it down clear canals between the rocks, brought it in to a steeply shelving beach, and packed it with pots and pans, a bag of mangosteens, and the provender for a long journey; enough to sink it to about an inch of freeboard when we had embarked, with two Malays, and Ryan's Chinaman to cook for us.

The river seemed much swifter now we were committed to it, and it poured just under my elbow. The forest, too, mounted over us to an astonishing height. We were in a narrow chasm. The upper Kelantan is often in anger among so many thwarting hills. The hills crowded in round us and sometimes gave the river the semblance of a narrow lake. Precipices of trees prevented a landing, our way ahead was closed by one bold mountain, and other heights stood over our retreat. Yet somehow our Malays always got us out of it. They stood up, one at the stem, one aft, each with a bamboo, and just when we were charging into the trees they shouted and poled us round a surprising corner. Or the canoe grounded in some snarling rapids—tilted and began to fill—and we all climbed out to persuade her upward against the stream; the stream lay in ambush behind rocks, sprang at us as we approached, and tried to wrench the long narrow craft out of our hands. It was while doing this against one barricade of granite

hummocks that some monkeys hooted at us, and the Malays jovially answered them, sharply clapping their hands. The panic-stricken monkeys fled, plunged desperately from tree to tree, became frantic and crashed the boughs when we increased our yells.

More than water flowed through that chasm. The sun filled it with a sluggish tide of burning air. When the stream narrowed and we moved under the foliage it was like going into the shadow and coolness of a cave. Fruits, legumes like scimitars, pale green globes, and clusters of yellow balls hung in the shade, and were often seen with only just time to duck the head. There were lenticular banks of bleached sand in midstream, for this was the dry season, and stranded on them the bare skeletons of trees, like the towering bones of dinosaurs. On the damp margins of those sandbanks clusters of butterflies quivered their petals like beds of stalkless flowers strangely agitated; when we splashed near they planed over the mirror, with an image below each, or shot up the green wall of the forest. Sometimes we passed a *rakit* going downstream, a raft of bamboos, with its man and wife and family as still as images. Once another canoe passed us going up, with several gaudy Malay youths showing off as noisy paddlers. They smiled at us and had a comparison to make between our load and theirs; their load might have been Cleopatra, a dark little lady in orange and emerald silk, gold ornaments in her black hair, and haughtily unconscious, even in that place, that we were present. Myriads of dragonflies and nymphs interlaced the sunlight just over the stream, as though the crystal air were being flawed by the heat. They settled on the edges of the

canoe, transitory decorations, with wings like flinders of quartz and hard bodies enameled in ruby and turquoise.

From behind one mountain, late in the day, a vivid cloud appeared, and the tops of the trees showed a strange uneasiness. A flock of hornbills, which had been quiet and unseen on the high roof where a tree was in fruit—except for chance obliquities you might suppose the forest was untenanted—suddenly mounted in an uproar, as though exploded from their tree, soared so swiftly and disorderly that they might have been in the power of a mad spiral of wind, and were gone.

Ryan began to show activity. He consulted his chart. He energized the Malays. He ordered us to leap out and help over the bad places. He looked at the sky. But there was no need to look at it. Its shadow rested on us. The trees suddenly shouted and turned white, and then vanished in falling water. It was then that the canoe jammed in some rocks; which made no difference to us, though we stood up to our middles when clearing her. In any case the river was warmer than the rain and did not smite so hard.

We landed at a beach and a hut at last, the place for which Ryan had been making to escape the downpour, but only when the worst of the storm was over. It was near a strange natural tower of white marble, which must have risen five hundred feet sheer from a little plain. There was a forest on its flat summit, and aprons of foliage hung wherever it had a narrow shelf. As we worked round it and looked up, its mass seemed to be hollowed with caverns. When a stone was flung at a dark window in a lower story a cloud of bats unsettled, like thick black dust.

There we left the river and camped; and in three more marches got to a hut of Ryan's in the heart of the hills, near a corner where Siam, Kelantan, and Perak were immediate on the map, but I could see no difference in the jungle. That land was a congestion of steep hills, with torrents circling their bases. Here and there in it a clearing let in the direct sunlight to mortals, who else moved in a lower confused murk lost to the sight of Heaven. On the way to the hut, Smith, whose indifference to all but his own suffering occasionally led him into more trouble, ignored the presence of some inquisitive wasps, which hovered about his head in the woods while he was reducing his misery with a long drink. He flapped a hand insultingly at one of them, though they looked as big as one-pounder shells, and made the same sort of noise in flight. In that instant I saw we stood close to their fort, from which the first wave of the attack, having got the signal, was coming over the top. I fled. Ryan had already gone. But Smith did not seem to know that we yelled to him because time was short. It was the wasps who really impressed that on him, and then he came faster than I should have thought he could, and brought them with him. The enemy had made up their minds, however, that only Smith had insulted them. They ignored Ryan and myself, though we used violence to keep them off our friend. For barely ten seconds, with those heroic insects coming at us like projectiles to repair their honor, the affair was grave, for we could retreat no more with the thorny rattans about us, and the only obvious track led back past the nest. But the attack was called off, in the moment of victory for the wasps, just as I

struck another off Smith's neck. They could have killed us, but they let us off, with the exception of the bayonets remaining in various parts of Smith's body and even in his scalp. There was no doubt about the venom of those stings; Smith was really a casualty.

The day was almost done when we reached the hut, and at the moment of arrival it looked to me the flimsiest vantage that man had ever built amid the powers of darkness. It had no walls. It was only a thatch raised on poles, with a floor of rough boughs about a yard above the earth. It was open to the jungle, which pressed round it and stood over it, so that, at such an hour, it seemed lost at a fathomless crepuscular depth, where the light and sounds of a world of men could never reach. A noble fire of aromatic timber burned at one end of it; Ryan said the smell of it helped to keep the beasts away. The Chinaman who had been left to watch the place smiled at this. He shook his head. Last night, he explained, an elephant, he come. He come there. The Chinaman pointed to the margin of a stream beside the hut, where certainly something large had rioted among the shrubs. He come, he stop. No good. He make noise. The Chinaman curled an arm above his head in the semblance of a trunk, and imitated a cornet. I go. The man pointed to the thatch. Yet the elephant, it seems, though he argued loudly about it all night, could not make up his mind to cast the sticks and grass of which the hut was made back into the forest; and at daybreak the Chinaman thought of some festal crackers he had secreted in a box, got down bravely, lit one, and threw the serpentining firework at the elephant, which fled.

As the man finished his tale the cicadas began theirs. They did that every evening. When from our place by the stream we could see the declining sun glance for the last time on the top story of the forest, where there was a break in the tangle, it was as though his straight beam, like a plectrum, struck the silent life of the place into an immediate chorus. The solitude woke. The cicadas and crickets shrilled, whirred, made the sound of a wind through wires, the sound of cutlery being ground, of circular saws singing through logs, the humming of dynamos. It all came suddenly, and I thought I could hear at last the very note of the high tension of life there. Yet it put me apart. I heard, but the triumphant chorus was not for me. My own life was not at that terrific pitch and confidence. That sound antedated the chant of the priests before the Ark, the Eroica Symphony, and the National Anthem. It may even be heard, some day, by some survivors of humanity, as their Last Post.

The song ended when night came. Life had made its sign. It was there. It would sing again in the morning. All dark Malaya contracted down to Ryan's hut. Only that was left, except some wavering patches of gold which our fire threw on unseen trees. That Chinaman was a good cook; and those nights when we sat in undress, listening to Ryan, and sometimes to a call in the outer dark, caused me to wonder what had become of all my other evenings of the past, when these certainly would be remembered. But my easy confidence went when at last each of us took his place on the logs, for sleep, having made up the fire. Sleep was not easy. One listened. There was no sound. Yet that was the

worst of it. When would the sound come? What would make it?

It was two in the morning, and I rested on my elbow and looked out. A thin filtering of moonlight was making the aisles spectral. The trees, it seemed to me, had stopped in an advance on us just as I looked at them. And what was that shape over there? Was it of the moon, or of the firelight? No, the fire was going out. I got up and put on some logs. Shadows jumped from rafter to rafter overhead as the flames changed. The head of the hornbill which was being smoked turned round on its cord in the sparks. All our fellows were asleep. The forest was asleep; or else listening. Then, far off, there was a sound, half snarl, half moan. When I looked out even the trees seemed to be attentive to that call. There was a long silence, and then it came again. It was nearer. It was insultingly confident. I had never heard a tiger in his own place before, and I lost the feeling that man is the noblest work of God; even if he is, perhaps tigers do not know it.

CHAPTER XXXVII

ALONGSIDE Ryan's hut the stream spread out into a pool with a floor of white sand. It had a canopy of leaves. A few rods of sunlight, almost solid in their bright distinction in that shade, rested obliquely on the bottom, firm in the smooth current. And the interior of the hut, that outpost of man, with its heartening reminders of the cunning and knowledge which maintained Ryan so far from his fellows, interested me more, I fear, than could any library. I liked to read the labels on his gallipots, and the names of his books. There were a jar of Epsom salts, and another of carbolic lotion; a bottle of iodine; tins of cabin biscuits; a few photos; surveying instruments; a cheap alarm clock; books on mining and geology; and some whisky bottles, empty. Big black carpenter bees had burrowed in the rafters, and their bolting holes could have been made by mice. Companies of wasps, of a size to fear nothing, gathered round the edges of these holes, gathering sawdust; but I noticed the wasps showed the bee great respect when his ugly head appeared from within. They went, and did not stay to say farewell.

"If you meet a rhinoceros," said Ryan as we started out one morning, "don't take any notice of him. Walk by him. He's a nervous old gentleman and doesn't like to be looked at." My friend's rifle was of the modern kind which will tumble an elephant, but he never used

it except for pigs and deer. We waded up the stream for a time, and then entered the woods, the dog buoyantly scouting ahead. Once, when he came back to us, he was a different sort of dog. It was the habit of that white man's mongrel to murder any too inquisitive native dog. That, no doubt, was merely his snobbery. He would attack an elephant, so Ryan said, and had killed a hamadryad, the most deadly snake in Asia, evidence which may show that there is no natural association between intelligence and courage. But by the look of him at that moment he would have fled from a rabbit, for his tail was clamped underneath, he was trembling, and he looked abject enough as he slunk against Ryan's feet. Ryan posed his rifle and went ahead warily. Presently he stopped, and stood looking at a hollow where the dry rushes were flattened. That was where a tiger had slept. To the dog the smell of the place was so distressing that he whimpered. In daylight, to me, it was of little more interest than the couch of a deer, for although I would not at night have wandered beyond the range of the firelight, after sunrise one usually has the feeling—usually, but not always—that the time and the place are man's. The Malays, I noticed, never went alone into the woods, so my feeling of security may have been only the presumption of ignorance.

Ryan told me nothing that morning of the mark of his excursion, and I did not ask him. It was sufficient to be with him. We crawled under thorns, but did not escape every hook, and sometimes then I lost my leader and was compelled to be watchful of his track. That was not really difficult, though once or twice I was sur-

prised to find how near a man may be to panic without knowing its silly livid face is at his elbow. One mountain stream, cascading down a varnished slide of rock where the wet ferns were constantly nodding, gathered into a font, and the drink we had there from goblets of twisted arum leaves reminded me that at home we rarely know what it is to eat and drink. The drops of water left on the waxy surface of my leaf were like globules of silver. Ryan brought out a bag of mangosteens. This fruit is nearly as large as a cricket ball, and about the color of it, when the ball is new. It is opened by pressing its thin rind, and the sections of translucent white pulp within have a flavor rather like the strawberry's.

While we ate them Ryan noticed a near tree, which the Sakai had scored to get poison for their darts. An ashy gum had exuded and hardened at each scar on the rough and grayish bark, but it was impossible to see the leaves of the tree, which were far out of sight. My companion had met these people, who are simple and harmless folk, elusive nomads who never leave the forest, and are very rarely seen even by those Malays whose clearings are on river banks within the forest. It was almost as unlikely that we should see them there, though they might have been watching us at that moment, as in Kota Bharu. Even the greater creatures of the woods move noiselessly, are never more than shadows, something briefly suspected without apparent reason, unless they choose otherwise. But for the insects, and an occasional bird, that nocturnal stillness might be thought untenanted. The leopard here is usually black, and in such a place he need not be even an apparition.

If you look at a section of the tangle on which some light is falling there is such a confusion of shapes, all imperfect and unrelated, and so great a contrast between surfaces brilliantly reflecting the sun and hollows from which night never goes, that the eye grows weary with the problem, and refuses to see anything but an insoluble riddle. An elephant might be standing there and you would not know it.

And the heat itself of noon will dull curiosity in anything that is not near and clearly visible. You are content with the accidents of the moment, as when a large dipterous fly, as I thought it, of a bright metallic green, kept returning to the sweetish pip of a mangosteen at my feet. I caught it, and discovered with a pain that it was a bee. But who would have thought a fly of that age was a bee? Large predatory flies were hawking about, and did not invite handling. There were infrequent butterflies. Yet the expectation, natural enough after those ridiculous tours of museums, and the gorgeously colored plates of life's variety in the tropics, that you will be even more gratified than by a perambulation of a zoölogical gardens, will be gravely disappointed in the equatorial forest itself. There the creatures watch you, but they are unseen. The occasions when you see them are momentous. Ryan told me that in his hut one evening, just as he was beginning to eat, he heard a pig munching nuts some distance across the stream, and went over. A big boar was making so eager an uproar at his feast that Ryan had no trouble in shooting him for the dogs, and left the carcass to be cut up in the morning. In the morning it had almost

gone. Ryan was annoyed with the tiger, and decided to punish him the next evening.

"You know," said Ryan, "I was a sniper in France, so I've had all the big-game hunting I want. If the tigers will leave me alone and not steal my dogs' meat, fine. There's room here for all of us. But they must kill their own pigs. That's fair, ain't it? Why, he'd only left enough to disappoint my dogs. Well, I couldn't find that tiger that evening. Somehow, though, I knew he was about. The place smelled like it. I thought, well, he's behind that bush and if he goes that way I've got him, and if he goes that way I've got him, and I waited. Nothing doing. Then I had a funny feeling run up my neck, and I gave a peep over my shoulder. There he was, sitting looking at me, ten feet away—I measured it afterward. Squatting and looking at me. Wondering what in hell I was doing, I suppose. Well . . . I felt bitched. Don't shoot, camarade. The best thing, I thought, is to slew round the gun slow, so I began. Like this. No quicker. That was when he went. He just went, sir. They can move." Ryan smiled reminiscently. Somewhere in the forest a bird continued his song in three notes, as though an idle urchin were learning to whistle and could not get it right, but was persevering. "One thing," continued Ryan, as he rose and began to gather his kit, "you can always see a tiger here if you want to. Keep quiet for a long time, and then begin to tap a tree. He strolls up. I don't know why, but perhaps he wants to know who the devil has got the nerve."

We began a long and breathless ascent, at first through a tiresome undergrowth, then through more open

timber, and presently came to an opening in the foliage on the brow of a hill, like a high window of the woods. We stood, and neither of us spoke for a long time. Malaya was below us in the afternoon light, an ocean of looming forest, its billows arrested, mute, and held as though by a secret conjuration the instant we appeared. "You and I," said Ryan at last, "are the first white men to see that."

CHAPTER XXXVIII

It was time to leave Ryan, and make across country to the Golok. The men had made fast the loads. All was ready. I looked round that narrow well in the trees, into which the sun had just poured the morning, and wondered why I was going. What was there for me at Charing Cross? Ryan made no comment when we left him, except to express urgently a desire that I would secure for him, as soon as I got to London, Bottomley's silk hat. "If it's gone," he said, "Lloyd George's hymn-book will do."

I will confess that when near sunset, a few days later, we came out by the Golok the sight of that river was beneficial. The day had been tiring. We were not far from Nipong, where we had stayed on our first night up country. Yet I had often felt during the journey that we were getting on too fast, especially when we were in the neighborhood of the *campongs*, the little communities of Malays. Sometimes we saw a new homestead, and a patch where the jungle had been only recently cleared. The burnt stumps of the smaller trees studded the earth, and the greater beams were still as they fell, too big to be moved, and amid all that wreckage a Malay pioneer had planted his first crop of dry rice; the slender blades of young rice were curiously emerald in what otherwise was a reminder of a sultry wood near Ypres. There would be a heavy barricade

round it to keep out the beasts; yet it was usual when walking through it, to see the tracks of the smaller creatures of the forest—for they were very noticeable in the new soft earth—especially the lace-like design made by the tiny hoofs of *pelandok,* the diminutive mouse-deer. And how friendly to us those husbandmen always were! They did what they could to make our pause longer and to keep the gossip alive. They sent their monkeys up palms to fetch green cocoanuts for drink, and brought baskets of mangosteens, lansats, and rambutans. It was our folly to hurry away from such people, from such peace in life, from such good manners.

If the place which gave us shelter that night by the Golok had a real name I do not know it, but I could easily adjust a new one to it. Smith had cheered me with words of what he called a forest checking station, an establishment of the Sultan's foresters. We found it in open ground above the Golok; and there the local headman visited us, and promised Smith a prahu for the morning to take us downstream to Rantau Panjang, and boatmen, too, if they could be got. In the meantime, though its outward prospect was worth some days of heat and fatigue, yet the hut inside did not suggest that we should have new bodies by the morning. Bats had chosen one corner, and of course the best corner, for their droppings. The rest of the poles which made the floor were young and old, new and rotten, large and small, and some were raised and some depressed. Some were firm when they took our weight, and others groaned and sank. The earth was ten feet below, and there many frogs were honking and krexing differing

tunes and with varied pitch. That meant swamp, and in fact the place looked too much like mosquitoes. I thought we had better build a fire under it, and smoke it out, and was cherishing an awkward armful of cocoanut shards and sticks when the first buffalo bull appeared. My sticks suddenly lost their value. This buffalo was not the usual inert bulk of black rubber. He moved under the stress of excitement. His eyes had an alert and inquiring glance, and his horns were yardarms. I thought I had better get up the ladder. When on the middle rung another buffalo bull appeared on the other side of the house, and as the two met rather instantly at the foot of the ladder I finished the rest of the rungs in a stride. It was easy at the time. Then Smith and I had a good view of it, spoiled by an alarming doubt that if the two explosive tons below us touched our props then our shelter was done for. It astonished me that pensive buffaloes could show such passionate energy, and the shocks of the charges were chilling with clash and dull drumming. Which would die first? Then a child appeared, a morsel of brown innocence without even a clout of self-consciousness. He approached the battleground and severely reprimanded the bulls. They stopped, and were obviously embarrassed, with their lowered heads caught in the very act of misdemeanor. They could not deny they had been fighting. The child struck the flank of the first buffalo with a light wand and told him what he was. The bull turned and shambled off meekly.

This episode took us well toward the dark. I got down to the floor, and on my back prepared to wait for morning. I began by counting the hours—there were

exactly eleven hours to 6 A.M., or half a day less one hour. To make sure that this was so I counted again, but found, unluckily, the same number, less the seconds which the calculation required to work out. The chorus of frogs now was like an iron-foundry; then it fell to one blacksmith shaping one horseshoe. The shoe got finished, and then the shipwrights began to rivet another plate to a ship. With the electric torch I found that twenty minutes had gone, and tried lying on the right side. This movement showed me that the door had swung open and that my head would be the first thing a buffalo would tread upon when entering the hut after climbing our ladder. The darkness outside, somehow, seemed very queer. That door was shut, so far as it could be lifted bodily to fit the opening. The wait for daylight was resumed. Smith, somewhere else on the floor, groaned unseen, and the boughs heaved as he changed his position. I wished I had made that fire underneath, because light wings were now brushing my face, and the mosquito who sang at one ear was as instantaneous as Gabriel's awakening clarion. There must have been clouds of them. I experimented with my head under the cover, yet that, after ten minutes—ten more minutes gone—nearly suffocated me. Besides, it left my feet exposed, and the light wings were brushing them.

A storm began, though at a great distance, and something with large, leathery, winnowing pinions began flying in the hut; and therefore when a plank became alarmingly alive under me as Smith turned over again I sat up in desperation and struck at those silent but draughty pinions, though I hit nothing. It was time

to try the other side. Midnight! We were getting on. Six hours to go. Possibly I slept, though creatures kept touching my face or crawling over my feet; but I was instantly awake when the hut filled with fire. The storm had come. The lightning, bursting a blue glare through the open timbers of the hut, made me think we were within the ribs of an immense skeleton.

The next day did come. I was there when it came, and in its light that hut appeared to be simple and ordinary. It was not bewitched, or else its unclean spirits went at cock-crow. Our packs were where we left them on the floor. Our tin mugs, standing yet on an old packing case, were ridiculously trite. This was mockery. The job of making a fire and some coffee was a matter for whistling. There was only coffee and hard biscuits, but I wish breakfast could be always like that. The Golok, however, had risen at least six feet in the night, and rafts of timber overturned in the storm were traveling fast on its yellow current. The sun was not yet above the hills, and so the woods were miraculously bright and revealed.

The prahu was a long and narrow dugout canoe, with a Malay at each end handling dexterously a long bamboo. They poled us into the stream, and the flood caught us and added us to the wreckage of the storm. We fled toward the sea. At least we had the assurance that we should encounter no rapids on the Golok. We merely rotated in eddies with the forest high on both banks, accompanied by floating trees whose submerged foliage was as dangerous as reefs. For the first half hour, therefore, my interest was fixed to the level of the Golok where the base of the forest was

awash, so as to be sure that when the canoe at last turned over I should know of the nearest port. This, I soon saw, was an interest too concentrated for a day which was already hot, but was only beginning, for the Malays in charge of us were as apprehensive of signs and ripples and the topmost twigs which nodded on the water line above wholly foundered snags, as are spiritualists to messages from a hidden world. I relaxed. There was nothing to do but to wait for Rantau Panjang.

The jungle on one bank was in Siam, and on the other in Malaya. It had an aspect of grace. The green plumes of the climbing palms were fortuitous over the stream, and from the cornices of the woods lianas were knotted and often trailed in the water. There were, as usual, very few flowers to be seen, and a rare spray in blossom was notable. The Golok serpentined so flamboyantly that you could suppose the young sun was playing hide and seek behind the forest and was trying to surprise us from different regions of the sky. There were attractive white sandy beaches within bays of the timber, and long spits which projected into the stream like thresholds to the woods. The forest was opulent and elegant, and I remembered, in contrast, the savage majesty of some aspects of the forest of the Amazon. The Golok was a river beside which one could live, but one never felt that of the Rio Jaci Parana of the Brazils. It was not yet noon, but cramp and the heat drove us to estimate the distance we still had to go and the hours we must remain exposed to the sun on a mirror reflecting his dazzling light. He had been staring straight at us now for some time. There

was no escape; a change from a thwart to the bottom of the canoe really took one no appreciable further distance from him. The weight of a tropical day is ponderable. It must be seriously upborne. The skin pricks wherever the sweat breaks at another pore, till all the pores are flowing conduits. One merely sinks the mind, and endures. We passed a beach to which a party of young Malays had made fast a *rakit*. They were squatting under the shadow of a shrub while a little fire burned beneath a cooking pot. An eddy caught us and whirled us away, and that picture of men in the woods, sudden and illusory, vanished.

The heat relented three hours after midday, but vast inky clouds began to tower. The evening storm was coming, and our nice calculations, based on time and the direction of the upper wind, as to whether or not we should arrive dry, gave us no comfort. In a malarial country rain may release the fever lurking in the blood. But we left the clouds behind us, with the sun behind the clouds. The upper rim of the mountain of threatening nimbus had a broad coast of opal, and this became shot with the colors of the rainbow, while presently, from the summit of the mass, a great fan of emerald light projected. A greenish tinge to a belt in a clear sky is not unusual, but vivid emerald was so strange a phenomenon that when Smith saw it he said he did not like it, as though it were evil.

The woods became interrupted with the cocoanut and betel palms of habitations, and women with water-pots stood in the evening light to watch us pass. Children waited on the banks while the buffaloes wallowed in the

shallows. When the prahu touched at Rantau Panjang, and I stepped ashore and stretched, it was with the usual sense that I had earned this feeling of well-being. The evenings of Kelantan arouse no desire for the peace of the Better Land. This earth can be a good place.

CHAPTER XXXIX

We got out to the coast again at last, and so cheaply, too, for our foolish intrusion into the wild against which society protects us, that I had the feeling that we had either stolen about unobserved, or that the evil genius of the place had craftily slipped the punishment into our pocket, and that we might find it when we thought the episode was closed. When, some weeks before, I first saw Kota Bharu I had thought it a pleasingly barbarous place; but then, coming on it out of the wilderness, I saw that it was an outpost of London and Peking. Even the primitive altar in a field, which looked pagan enough when I noticed it on the outward journey, now seemed not so distantly related to St. Paul's. We were all right again, with familiar things about us.

Next morning we boarded a little coasting steamer for Singapore. She was neat and bright, my cabin was hung with chintz having a pattern of rosebuds, and the saloon table was as well ordered as that of a good hotel. The captain, the kind man, listened to the tale of our fun up country, and then said: "You'd like some news from home. Here's the papers by the last mail." Most certainly, secure within chintz curtains again, and with poisoned feet already less inflamed, we wanted news of England. The smiling little sailor re-entered with a week's bound numbers of the *Daily Photograph.* I opened the volume.

It had better be confessed. I was anxious to see the news of England, yet the first sight of leeches hanging to my body did not give me a worse shock than that opened page. News from England! O my country! Those blood-sucking worms, those jungle bugs which raised weals, the warnings of fever, the dark forests and the cataracts, the night call of the tiger—if all that were savagery, then what was the word for this? Now the natives we had met, even the peasants far inland, were certainly not barbarians. One learns to respect and to like the Malays. They are a quiet, well-mannered, humorous, and hospitable people; and so I felt I should be disinclined to expose these pictorial representations of contemporary English life to a Malay gentleman, especially the pictures showing our ladies playing tennis (useless to explain to a Malay that such a popular picture is got by holding the camera close to the ground when the lady kicks) and that page full of bathers and dancers, who might remind him of the scandalous days when the house of the rajah caused so much talk in the village. From that newspaper, at a distance from home where it was impossible to get the counterpoise, you might have supposed that England, despairing of her wreckage, was abandoned to vulgar inanities.

In the forest, on some anxious nights when sleep would not come, I had been sustained by the comforting memory of Waterloo Bridge at midnight, and a nook in Surrey, and some corners of Devonshire; in this world things like that, it was strangely certain, did exist, and they were heartening. But by the China Sea I felt a sudden despair for England as I turned those pages,

and saw the home life reflected only in such pictures, unqualified anywhere by a word that was not addressed to the mentally deficient. To open those popular sheets seemed to let fly an insane and fatuous blare. There was no sense in the packet. It was only a silly noise. Without a single humorous or serious comment to correct them, those photographs and idiotic paragraphs gave me the first real scare I had had in nearly six months' travel among the Malay Islands. It was a very subdued adventurer who handed the volume of a week's news of home back to the nice captain; for it was unpleasant to realize that, though out of the jungle, there was that to go back to.

I had become used to the Malays. I had learned to understand, in a measure, their ways of living and of looking at life. They have solved successfully the problem of accommodating themselves to their circumstances. They are a happy folk. You rarely see an anxious face among them, and never a hungry child. They are not required to regard, as are Christians, the problem of reconstructing their society because they have dismantled it in a grand and protracted mania. They need no old-age pension. Their future is secure, if they will but give a brief time yearly to rice fields, cocoanuts, and fishing nets. But I felt, even with the assurance about me of those rosebud curtains, and the knowledge that the Red Ensign was overhead, a sudden black doubt that I understood my own people, which was a curious accident to happen so far off as the China Sea merely through glancing at some illustrated daily papers from London.

CHAPTER XL

September 10.—I suppose I am as interested in Singapore as in any place I have ever seen. It is, sometimes, a fearful interest. Singapore seethes with human life, and can be as fascinating and repellent as an exposed formicarium where the urgent streaming of instinctive protoplasm, even if you are a naturalist, can be worse than the silence of the Sphinx. In the name of God, why is it, what is it doing? You get the idea that even the rank smells of Singapore are of its fecundity. Such odors are beyond merely ordinary carelessness. The gush of its life is from no failing source. It spurts and eddies in lusty brown swashes unceasingly through every street and alley. That tide is never low; it is always rising higher. China need not be a military nation; she merely overflows into neighboring lands. Yet perhaps humanity anywhere in the mass will not bear looking at for long. It is dominant on earth, but its movements are as unreasonable and incalculable as seismic convulsions. The mob of any great city flattens and nullifies reason, even in reasonable men. The movements of the herd are more infectious than plague, and can be as ruinous; for the instinct to self-preservation, so easily moved by fear, may be the same as social suicide, and may wreck all that fine minds have accomplished. Of an evening, though, quiet within the bungalow of some English

friends which overlooks the city's delightful botanical gardens—a house where I have been sheltered, often to my embarrassment, as though my desires in Singapore's broad and undirected flood of human bodies were of importance—this dread of the inscrutable mass movements of humanity was lessened. After all, fine minds, I could see, have a persistence which is as natural as the instinctive movements of the herd. The lady of the house somehow maintained in that alien place the repose of an English garden, and the young men, occupied by the problems of wide commercial and administrative affairs, appeared to me to be as apart from the trend of mankind's instinctive movements as though they were not quite of that stock. (Another dream, evoked by the evening's peace and well-being?) After a bewildering day of mine in the alleys at the back of the city where the enigmatic stream of humanity give no sign of its destiny, except the temples to Dragons and to Siva, to Buddha and Mohammed, in that cool bungalow one young man would talk of the English poets, of the studies of Orientalists, and of Amiens cathedral, as though a unanimous folly of all mankind that should presently rise to founder the whole achievement of industrious human hands would still leave high and immune those peaks from which a few men have surmised a day not yet come. And his companion, whose habit it was after dinner to get into Malay dress, appeared to be even unaware that his fellows are liable to destructive manias—though he himself counted as a survivor of the first affair at Gheluvelt. As a Malay official, he is now, apparently, forgetful of Europe; he was silent when we talked of the West; but when the forests were

mentioned, and the language and lore of the Malay peasants, and the annals of this corner of Asia, you might have supposed that he was aware of nothing but the jungle and the bazaars. Yet common humanity remains as unconscious of the thoughts of fine minds as it is of the eccentricities of the earth's polar axes—those little wabbles which are supposed to give this planet its alternating glacial and genial periods.

September 11.—Sailed for London at four o'clock this afternoon. The *Patroclus* has even a nursery, which reminds me that this will be my first long voyage in a big passenger ship. I was taken to my cabin—passing a barber's shop on my journey—and afterward I had to stop in an alleyway to think out the route before I knew how to return to my own address in this community. I did find it, after taking several false turnings—for I was determined not to ask a steward to take me home—and was sitting there nursing the conviction that in such a town one could drop overboard and it would never be known, when a stiff little man came in and looked at me as if he were determined to be able to swear to me when the charge was at last formulated. He did not have to admit he was the master of that ship. I could see he was. And now it seems to me that, with the nursery and the laundry, I am under a comprehensive eye.

September 13.—Yesterday at Kuala Lumpor, to which I motored while the ship was at Port Swettenham, I entered an editorial office, and stood unannounced over an old friend, now an exile, while he corrected his proofs. He flung up petulantly a blue-penciled sheet at me, because no doubt mine was only the shadow of

another coolie. His astonishment and unbelief on his discovery that I refused to take it suggested that the boundary between belief and doubt can never be drawn in this world. I felt almost sorry that I could not fade away before his staring and questioning eyes, and so convince him of the mysterious dimension. But there is never much in a miracle, when it is explained.

In the next dawn we approached Penang. The day, which was still behind the heights of the mainland, was announced in old rose and gold. A little of that light had just touched Penang Island ahead of us; that was a faint augury of coast, with but one blue-and-white building on a hill awake and bright, though the yellow eye of its lighthouse on the sea level still watched us in the night. A junk appeared to be in midair. There was a smell of spice.

September 15.—Pulo Way in sight, some distance to port. This time it is the last of the Malay Islands. Farewell, the East Indies!

CHAPTER XLI

It was not pleasant to be on deck that night, and the promenaders and gossipers had abandoned it. Spume was shooting inboard. The deck chairs huddled in the nook amidships were empty. One chair left the pack and began a stealthy move toward the ship's side. The darkness surging past was of immense weight, and at times it seemed to rise above its bounds and to burst. Somewhere forward a loosened wind screen was giving a startling imitation of gunfire. He went to look overside, but it was like staring at fate. Nothing could be seen. His hands had touched the clammy canvas of a life belt in its rack, and as he wiped them with his handkerchief he glanced at the belt. An amusing little object! A fat lot of magic in that hopeful circle of life! He descended to his cabin, and then the noisy world stood still again, muffled and quiet, under the glow-lamps. Yet he did not find it easy to read. At times a mass of water exploded on the forward deck, and then his safe and muffled world trembled. His mind left his book. Amiel's intimate *Journal* became foreign, and dropped to the blanket. He listened to sounds that were like the echoes of distant battle, to forlorn and nameless alarms and warnings, to sudden fierce shouting far away in another world, to despairing and dying cries. Well, all of it was in another world, anyhow. Outer night and its sounds had nothing to do with

him. Men who knew what to do were doing it. The movements of the ship were like those of a great living creature. In its long leisurely breathing its body rose and fell. The faint tremor of the turbines was of the will which repressed an astonishing vitality and strength. He began reading again. . . .

A lurch of the ship woke him. It was four o'clock. For a moment he wondered whether something had happened in the world beyond him, or whether he had been dreaming. But the big creature was still breathing in a deep and leisurely way. Now and then, though, it growled and shook itself, for the wind seemed worse and the noises more challenging. He turned out the lights; and when next he woke it was because the sun had risen high enough to shine through his port window, and the steward had rattled the teacup when placing the morning tray where he could reach it without leaving his bunk.

"Fine morning, sir," said the steward.

"A bad night, wasn't it, steward?"

"Oh, nothing out of the way, sir."

The jolly passenger, who knew the sea and so was always loud and hearty with the quartermasters, who saw to it that everybody had an interest in the sweepstake for the day's run, and pulled the ladies' chairs briskly about for them, and fed the gramophone, met him in the corridor as he was going to the bathroom. The jolly man danced a little greeting in his dressing-gown. "Dirty work last night," said the dancer, beaming. "Thought that even I might be a bit sick early this morning. Does one good, though, to feel the sea. The old thing actually rolled. Didn't know she could."

The breakfast bugle brought the passengers assembling about the head of the saloon companion. There were some jokes about breakfast. The ladies were greeted with mock surprise. They were asked whether they were quite sure they wanted any. It was better to go easy after a wild night. That was the jolly man's voice, followed by his own laughter, the first to follow his own jokes.

The lady from Hongkong complained at breakfast that her steward had forgotten to close her port window last night. "I had to get up and shut it myself. Quite suddenly the wind was terrible, and do you know, my window was open. I might have got an awful chill. So careless. Now, on the P. & O.—" She had traveled widely, the lady from Hongkong, by *all* the principal lines, and she would never travel by *this* one any more, you know. Didn't the bacon taste the least bit queer? Did he think there was any advantage to be got out of the French exchange? If so, she would leave the ship at Marseilles and stay in the Riviera. Steward, some more bacon, well done! "Somebody told me," she went on, "that the ship lurched frightfully once last night. I always said it would, if ever it met really bad weather."

He trusted she would take no harm from the accident of the open window, and found himself speculating, while listening politely but without attention to her complaining voice, whether there was not a more profound difference between some human creatures, say between a man like Amiel and the lady from Hongkong, than there was between himself and one of the lower animals. The passengers at the captain's table laughed

aloud at a joke secret to themselves. The captain was not with them that morning. One of the men there turned and called over to the next table: "I say, Mrs. Taft here says she was just climbing out to shut her window when the ship suddenly rolled last night, and her husband says—"

"Hadn't you better let him say it?" asked the young botanist from Java.

"There!" exclaimed the lady beside him. "Now we shan't hear it. It's too bad of you."

The sun was warm on the promenade deck. Two children, while a sad *ayah* watched them, were boisterous with cigarette tins in which rattled a few coins.

The convalescent naval surgeon regarded the noisy children with malignity and exclaimed: "Not because I hate them, but because I'm sure their father has put spurious coins in those boxes, I'd like to chuck 'em both overboard. It doesn't sound like good money."

"Surely, Doctor, you can't mean you'd cast children into the sea for being playful?" said a lady, leaning from her chair toward him with a smile inviting him to say more. But the doctor merely mumbled and went on reading the memoirs of Benvenuto Cellini.

At the after end of the deck the captain, waving his hands backward in good-natured deprecation toward a group of passengers, was making as brief as possible his usual morning round. But he stopped when he met the direct look of the naval officer, bent down with his hands resting on the arms of the surgeon's chair, and said something which was inaudible. All the reader of Amiel in the next chair could hear was, "Oh, about four. What with that and an S O S call, I had one

hour's sleep last night." He stroked his nose and walked briskly away.

The reader of Amiel looked seaward. So there had been a call for help! But how impossible it seemed. The very ship appeared to be enjoying that sea. She was playful, rearing a little at times, and throwing dazzling, snow-like clouds. The children jumped and clapped their hands when a flight of spray leaped higher than usual. The very waves were chanting. They were running heavily past, with brilliant crests. Not far from the bows the ghost of a rainbow stood in an invisible mist above the riot of waters; it would fade, yet glow again, an intangible vision that was constant and motionless in that boisterous world, as though it were a symbol of the imperishable virtue of beauty. The radiant clouds moved in the leisure of eternity. On the horizon, under one of them, like a model fixed to the clear rim of the world, was a barque under all sails. He felt that dread and mischance could never persist in the light of that morning. There were no shadows. He had never felt better in his life. All was well. He closed the covers on Amiel's so often melancholy conclusions, and watched a sailor at work who whistled, while busy about the falls of a davit. Near the sailor was the life-belt rack, where he had stood the night before. But the rack was empty.

He flung his book on his chair, stood and filled his pipe, and went up to the boat deck. The prospect was wider there, and he wanted to see as much of this beautiful world as he could. He paused up there to watch a quartermaster chalking the deck for quoits; there was to be a tournament that afternoon.

"Nasty night, last night, wasn't it?" he said to the sailor. He meant nothing particular by that. As a fact, he had almost forgotten the night before. But one always talks of the weather to a sailor; and one ought to be polite to these fellows.

"Yes, sir, it was."

"I could tell that, in my cabin."

"I expect you could, sir."

"Wasn't there an S O S call? I think I heard some one mention it?"

"Very likely. We did stand by." The sailor stood up, straightened his back, and jerked his thumb seaward. "One of our chaps went overside. Young Bob —but you wouldn't know him—"

"Went overside? Not drowned?"

"What would you expect, sir, on such a night? The ship put about. The passengers complain of a draught. We got out a boat. Cruised about for an hour. Nothing." The sailor turned and gazed aft, then bent down again and went on chalking for quoits.

CHAPTER XLII

SOMETHING had happened. I switched on the reading lamp at the head of the bunk and looked at my watch. Four in the morning! I could have sworn that the noise which had roused me was the herald of eclipse and overthrow. But had I heard anything? My cabin appeared to be a private seclusion in the hush at the end of time and chance. Had the ship stopped? There was no movement. She might have been in harbor. Yet when I rested against the bulkhead I could hear the many tiny mysterious voices speaking everywhere in the ship: twitters, ticks and tacks, rumbles—a clang, a guggle—a purring and a humming, but all reduced and far. She was going slow. Just as I switched off the light the monstrous sound came again, a long shuddering bellow.

Fog! Well, we were nearing home and it was meet that I should have an early notice that I had come to the end of the islands, the beaches, and the forests. As for islands, I had seen as many as would make an archipelago of myths, islands suitable for all the fables. Only a few days ago I came out on deck at sunrise by chance, and we were steaming by Giardino, and Etna was over us. That was the very hour to pass through the Strait of Messina. We went close to Stromboli, which was vexed with heavy gusts of smoke, and the Lipari Islands were strung out beyond in the Mediter-

ranean weather of the legends. Ah, what a chance man had in that sea, once he had got beyond the worst of his fears and his stone implements! And at least five times in the long story of his life there, after he learned to make bronze, he seemed well on the way to an intellectual light that was equal to the sunshine at his porch. To look at those lambent shores above that plain of malachite was to see the clear invitation to him. How could he remain in darkness? There were the very colors and the radiance to transmute the muddy residue of his mind. Yet each time that he was near to full achievement his house fell on him; perhaps because he met the eye of Jove with arrogance, and perhaps because his pride had made him careless. The sunset of that day when we passed through the Tyrrhenian Sea was like a pæan to the renown of man; and so all we latter-day witnesses of Heaven's tribute to man's long effort retired to the saloon, where there was a concert; and an elderly Scotch passenger, to whom probably not a secret of the visible universe is unrevealed, and not many of the secrets of God, sang to us something about the banks of Loch Lomond; or rather, he stated the case for the low road, and for the high, spectacles on the end of his nose, face slightly lifted to keep them there and to get a good sight of his notebook, as though this were evidence and we were in a police court.

There was the siren again! Evidently there was some distance still to go to the everlasting light. It was shuddering and bellowing when the prompt little steward came in with the morning tea just after six. That moment when the tray is put beside you, and the lamp is doused because now you can see by the light of an-

other day, always seemed to me to be of miraculous and pleasant significance, as though not one of us can be forgotten, but in our due time, out of the fog of the vast and impersonal world not us, will come the knock at our door (come in!) just as if, after all our doubting derision, the hairs of the head of each of us really had been numbered.

We ought to have been off Ushant, but from the deck there was no telling where we were. The air was bleak, the decks were wet, and there was no horizon. I climbed to the captain's bridge—by command, brought by the captain's messenger; nothing less could induce me to venture there—and the master's gray parrot, on seeing me, gave his confusing imitation of the bo'sun's pipe, and then in a gruff voice condemned my eyes because I am a farmer and no sailor. The fog had thinned a little to weatherward, but in the east it lay in banks and gave a vista of many horizons, and all of them false. One looked that way, and got the impression that Europe was mislaid. Yet, no; the master said that during the night he received three cross-bearings by wireless, and that, in spite of my dubiety, we were in soundings and fifty miles south of the Lizard. We should be off Portland in the early afternoon.

There was a rumor, when we were at lunch, that the Start was in sight. But a retired naval surgeon was telling me about Peking at that moment. I am not sure that I listened attentively to the news that England was in view. I did not get up. Then presently it struck me that something had happened of more interest to me even than the nearness of Devon. I mean the fact that I did not get up to see it. This so

puzzled me that I attended in but a polite way to the doctor's further words on China. What had happened?

Look here—I admonished myself—when you've been nearing this particular island on other voyages you've stayed on deck till near sunrise so that you might see the first English light. What's the matter now? You know you don't want this lunch.

It was clear that I was returning on this voyage a man who was, in some way, different from the earlier traveler, and I am not sure that I liked this new character; but I will say for him that he himself was genuinely puzzled about it, and that he had no other feeling; in fact, he had no feeling at all, except that he was deeply and comfortably glad to be near home again. What, then, I exclaimed to myself, is not England home? What's the difference?

You may be talking with a friend in a house where the mirrors are queerly placed, and you know your surprise when you see the reflection of some one you think you know, and which a steadier glance tells you is indeed an aspect of yourself you have not seen before. I caught now a glimpse of a man who did not want to go up and look at the Start. I could make nothing of him. I had a sight, as it were, of but the back of his head. He said diffidently that all he wanted was to see a familiar gate again, and the forms of the shrubs about it, and those who would most certainly have that gate open before he reached it. He explained that that gate happened to be in England, and not in Ternate; a distinction, I warned him, that was outrageous. No, he said. It would have been outrageous ten years ago, but that he was not responsible for what had come into those

years. The world had been turning round and going on. Our little star was now in a different region of the sky. He was merely carried with it and must accept the new phenomena whether he liked them or not. Ternate might be home; and he quoted from one of his odd books: "Why should I be lonely? Is not our planet in the Milky Way?"

This new mark in his life so disturbed him that he felt he dare not reveal it to the English doctor who was returning home after some years in China and Japan. When both of them reached the deck the Start was far astern and was all but dissolved in a murk. In overcoats and wraps the passengers watched the approach of the ship to Portland; a gray sky and a forbidding coast which enlarged its gloom and made its frown more ominous till Portland hung over the ship, as though it were a giant that was not really very interested in the morsel of life that had crept to its feet. We gazed at it in silence. "Is that the prison on the top of it?" presently asked the naval surgeon. "Come into the smoke room out of it," said he. "Will it never change? That is what it looked like when I lolloped under it in a destroyer, hunting for periscopes. Where's that steward?"

This was more than I could stand. I knew what the doctor meant. But at times we want more than a mere fellowship in a murk. Were we still only at the end of an era? Had the new day not yet come?

We got under way again, and night fell on the coast and sank at last over all the waters. Leaning on the bulwarks and gazing landward, I could just make out a deeper shadow athwart the seas of night, formless

under the faint glimmer in the meridian. It had no bounds. It was immense and intangible. Looking at it, I felt an awakening of understanding. I felt the inward glow of a new and deep desire. I cannot tell you what that shadow was, for, though transcendently it was there, it was dim and mysterious, almost beyond vision; England! That shadow was the indenture on the very stars of an old grandeur, the memory impressed on night itself, blurred but indelible, of an ancient renown. It was the emanation of an idea too great for us to know; the dimmering through the gloom to me in my isolation and misgiving of wonderful things almost forgotten, of the dreams and exaltations of splendid youth, of the fidelity of comrades, of noble achievements, of our long-past intimate sorrows, of precious things unspoken but understood, of our dead. No. Not even old night could hide that presence. It was indefinable, majestic, severe, and still. And it may have been resigned and communing, its age-long work done, in the fall of a darkness which it knew to be ultimate. Or it may have been retired within the night, dominant on its seas, making no sign, knowing the supreme test of all its labors was at hand, vigilant but composed, waiting for another morning to dawn in the hearts of men, when there should be light to build the City of God.

THE END